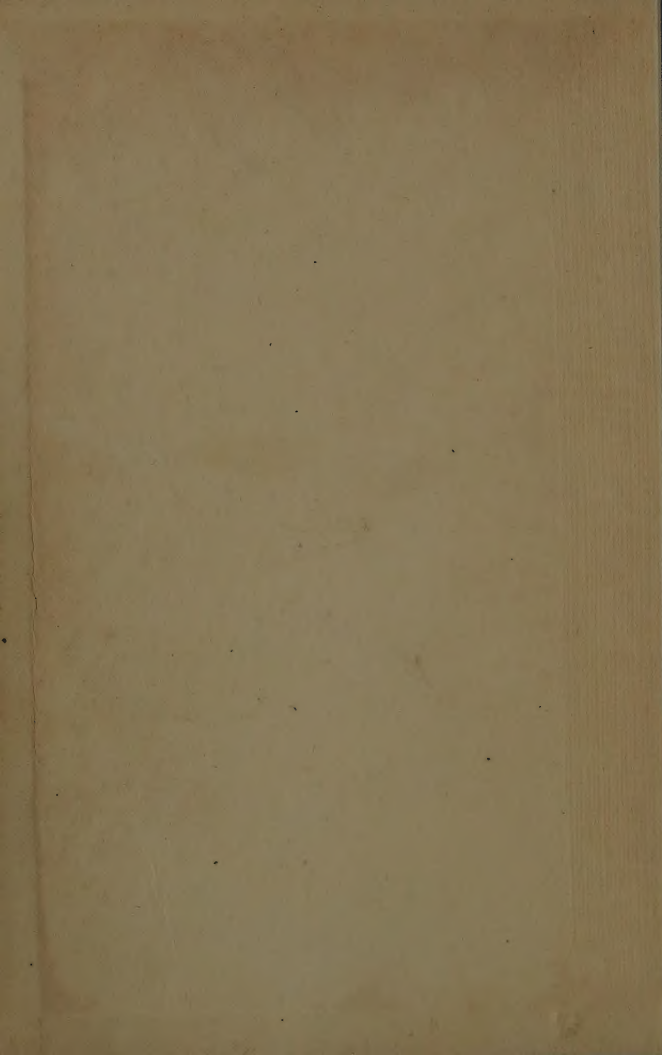




K. B. Bailey.
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LES
PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES

PAR

J.-B. P. MOLIÈRE.

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE.

THE introduction and notes accompanying the present edition of *Les Précieuses ridicules* are meant to illustrate, as far as may be possible in a school-book, the numerous points of grammatical, literary and historical interest occurring in the play. I willingly acknowledge that I am indebted to several previous editions for valuable help, especially to those of Despois (in *Les Grands Écrivains de la France*), Fritsche, Livet and Larroumet, though these are not the only ones I have consulted. For the biographical sketch on Molière I am chiefly indebted to Mahrenholtz's *Molière's Leben und Werke* and Larroumet's *La Comédie de Molière*. The tenth volume (part I.) of the Molière-edition in *Les Grands Écrivains* containing the biography of the poet only appeared, when this edition was printed. Ampler information than could be given here on French society in the seventeenth century and on Molière's play will be found in Despois' edition and in the books enumerated by Larroumet in his edition

(pp. 78—80) and by Crane in his interesting publication *La Société Française au xvii^e Siècle. An account of French Society in the xviith century from contemporary writers* (pp. xlvii—lvii). The sources from which my grammatical notes are derived are various, but it would take too much space to enumerate them here. I will only mention that Haase's convenient handbook *Französische Syntax des xvii. Jahrhunderts* appeared early enough to be made use of. In the grammatical notes I have frequently referred to the Syntax in the *Wellington College French Grammar* by Eve and De Baudiss, a choice which, I think, needs no justification, as this is acknowledged to be one of the best French grammars published in this country. Lastly I am glad to express my gratitude to Mr H. W. Eve and Dr H. Jackson who have kindly assisted me by valuable suggestions while the book has been passing through the press.

CAMBRIDGE,

December 16, 1889.

INTRODUCTION.

MOLIÈRE'S LIFE AND WORKS.

JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN, baptized at Paris on the 15th of January, 1622, and perhaps born on the same day, was the eldest son of Jean Poquelin, a wealthy upholsterer and (from 1633) 'valet de chambre tapissier du roi'. Originally educated for his father's profession he was afterwards sent to the famous Jesuit Collège de Clermont (at present Lycée Louis le Grand), a school frequented by sons of high families, where, together with Chapelle, Cyrano de Bergerac, and some other boys of talent, he received instruction in philosophy from Gassendi, an advocate of the Epicurean system, to whose influence we may partly ascribe his liberal opinions. At this time he wrote a translation in verse of Lucretius's philosophical poem *De rerum natura* which, with the exception of a small fragment intercalated in the *Misanthrope* (II. 4) has not survived. Nor are early attempts of his at comedy preserved, which, if we believe a somewhat uncertain tradition, he made in common with Cyrano de Bergerac. It is said that he next studied jurisprudence and took the degree of licentiate of law at Orléans; but that he soon abandoned the profession of a barrister. Undoubtedly he followed his inclination for the stage in 1645, and cast in his lot with a company of amateurs who followed the lead of an energetic woman, Madeleine Béjart. Like other actors of his time he adopted a pseudonym and called himself Molière, a name borne by a novelist who died in 1623. The company, notwithstanding the high-sounding name 'L'Illustre Théâtre' which they had given themselves, acted with little success. Twice they had to change their playhouse in Paris, and at last they were obliged

to leave the capital and try their fortune on a provincial tour. The details of the route followed by the company during the twelve years of their wanderings will, in all probability, never be known; there are, however, not a few documents of various kinds which prove Molière's presence in certain towns at certain dates. In 1648 he was at Nantes, in 1650 at Narbonne, later on at Vienne. At Lyon he was successful as an actor and a playwright. Other companies could not stand against him and their best elements joined his. Probably he began by writing in imitation of Italian models a certain number of small farces, most of which are lost.

He produced his first regular five-act comedy in verse, *L'Etourdi*, at Lyon between 1653 and 1655. It is a 'comédie d'intrigue', imitated from an Italian play and representing the devices of a clever valet incessantly crossed by the blunders of his master. The easy-running and natural dialogue doubtless renders Molière's comedy superior to the Italian original. Many other towns, as Nîmes, Avignon, where he made the acquaintance of the painter Mignard, and Grenoble, were visited by Molière's company. At Pézénas he found a protector in the prince de Conti, who later on, when he had formally renounced the world, became a violent adversary of comedies in general, and of Molière's in particular. From November 1655 till February 1656 during the session of the Estates of Languedoc, presided over by the prince de Conti, Molière gave lucrative representations at Pézénas. In the end of 1656 he acted before the Estates of Languedoc at Béziers his second five-act comedy in verse, *Le Dépit amoureux*, which may be called his first attempt at the 'comédie de caractère', though the greater part of it, taken from an Italian source, is in the style of the 'comédie d'intrigue'. The two elements of the play are so loosely connected, that it has been possible to separate them from each other and to act the original part, the proper 'dépit amoureux', by itself. Encouraged by the success both of his company and of his plays, and having secured the protection of 'Monsieur' the brother of the king, Molière resolved at last to settle at Paris. He appeared there with his company consisting of eleven persons

in 1658. On the 24th of October in the *salle des gardes* of the Louvre he played before the young king Louis XIV. and the court Corneille's tragedy *Nicomède* and one of his own farces, *Le Docteur amoureux*.

The king was so much pleased with the performance that he allowed the new company to use the playhouse of the Petit-Bourbon (part of the Louvre) alternately with an Italian company and to take the title 'troupe de Monsieur'. The favour which *L'Etourai* and *Le Dépit amoureux* found with the public encouraged Molière to write a new play, *Les Précieuses ridicules*, which was acted for the first time on the 18th of November, 1659. In this play the author abandoned the old fashion of merely amusing by grotesque types of character and the crossing intrigues of an intricate plot, and inaugurated the comedy of manners by ridiculing the extravagances of a certain class of society. The success of the *Précieuses ridicules* might have encouraged him to persevere in the new way; nevertheless we see him relapse into the Italian farce in his next play, *Sganarelle*, acted in May 1660. In October of the same year the 'surintendant des bâtiments du roi' suddenly ordered the playhouse of the Petit-Bourbon to be demolished, the place being wanted for an enlargement of the Louvre. Thus without warning Molière saw himself deprived of his theatre. The king however gave him permission to use that of the Palais-Royal, which had been built some twenty years before by the cardinal de Richelieu for the representation of his own dramatic attempts. But as the room was in a lamentable state of decay and required thorough renovation, several months passed before Molière could reappear before the public.

On January the 20th, 1661, the playhouse of the Palais-Royal was opened, and a fortnight later he produced *Don Garcie de Navarre*, a stately 'comédie héroïque' which he had written about a year before in the Spanish style. It was little appreciated, and to make up for the unexpected failure he wrote in the same year *L'Ecole des Maris*, which deals with the theme of Terence's *Adelphi*, the superiority of lenient over severe education. This play, the success of which fulfilled Molière's

hopes, and which according to a contemporary gazette formed 'le charme de tout Paris', was rapidly followed by the short comedy *Les Fâcheux*, the first example of a 'ballet-comédie', written and learnt within a fortnight and first acted at the château de Vaux during the famous festivities given in honour of Louis XIV. by the minister of finance, Fouquet, not long before his arrest and imprisonment.

On the 20th of February, 1662, Molière married Armande-Grésinde Béjart, the young sister of his friend Madeleine. This ill-assorted and unhappy marriage gave Molière's enemies occasion for more or less infamous calumnies, and several of his subsequent plays were evidently written under the pressure of troubles resulting from it. This was the case with the next play, *L'Ecole des Femmes*, which appeared in December 1662. In its fundamental idea, the uselessness of severe rules and strict supervision, and in its chief characters it much resembles *L'Ecole des Maris*, though it has little in common with it as regards the plot, and certainly surpasses it in comic power and depth of thought. It was received with great applause, and in consequence violently and in some respects not unjustly attacked by Molière's adversaries. The poet supported by the king, answered not less violently with *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* and *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. In the beginning of 1664 Molière wrote for the court on the king's order, and apparently in haste, the little one-act farce, *Le Mariage forcé*, extended by inserted ballets to a 'comédie-ballet' of three acts. The plot and the amusing character of Marphurius, the Pyrrhonian philosopher, Molière owed to Rabelais, that of Panrace, the Aristotelian philosopher, to an earlier French comedy. In the same year Molière contributed to the brilliant court-festivities of the 'enchanted island' at Versailles, the five-act 'comédie-ballet' *La Princesse d'Elide*, a close imitation of a comedy of the Spanish playwright Moreto, and composed in such a hurry that little more than one act of it could be written in verse. The first performance of the play was destined to have a fatal influence on Molière's life, for it gave rise to the intrigues of his wife Armande, which were such a source of grief to him.

On the same occasion Molière for the first time represented three acts of the comedy *Le Tartuffe*, which were not unfavourably received. The king was however prevailed upon by the intrigues of *tartuffes* to forbid the play to be brought before the public. The hatred of the *dévots* against Molière went so far as to ask that the author and his comedy should be burnt. On the other hand persons of high rank, and among them the cardinal-legate Chigi, invited Molière to recite the play in private before them. How fashionable this became may be seen from one of Boileau's satires (III), written 1665, where an invitation to dinner is made more attractive by the promise, 'Molière avec Tartuffe y doit jouer son rôle'.

The attacks on the part of the *dévots* did not prevent the poet from bringing upon the stage in 1665 a play of somewhat similar tendency, *Don Juan*, or *Le Festin de Pierre*. The type of the licentious blasphemer Don Juan, and his marvellous punishment, were first borrowed from Spanish popular tradition and introduced into dramatic literature by the Spaniard Tirso de Molina. Various nations adapted the subject to their stages. Molière made use both of the original and of later forms of the play, modifying however the chief characters. The addition of a new feature, hypocrisy, to Don Juan's character has perhaps been justly taken for a reply to the intrigues of the preceding year against *Le Tartuffe*. The new play, of course, called forth new attacks which were better justified than those on its predecessor. For, though the poet may not share Don Juan's opinions on religion, it cannot be denied that the cause of religion finds rather a poor advocate in the comic person of the timid and commonplace valet Sganarelle. One scene, where Don Juan gives alms to a poor man not for God's sake but for the sake of humanity, was forbidden after the first representation of the play. Soon Molière withdrew it altogether from the stage. Four years after his death Thomas Corneille (the younger) recast it into alexandrines, and in order to make it brighter and more moral added comic scenes and altered or left out what had given offence. Only in 1682 Molière's play appeared in print in a mutilated form. The full text has however

been preserved by a lucky chance. The part taken by the king in the quarrel about *Don Juan* may be inferred from the fact that some months after its appearance he granted Molière's company a pension of 6000 livres and the title of 'troupe du roi'. In the same year (1665) Molière composed for the court the small farce *L'Amour médecin*, suggested by a play of the Spaniard Lope de Vega, and written in five days. Though superficially executed, the play is of a certain importance, for with it begins the series of Molière's attacks upon the doctors of his time. Two causes may be alleged to account for his animosity against them. At Paris they had made themselves especially ridiculous, being most of them slaves to tradition, blind to the progress of science, and in spite of their ignorance conceited and arrogant. Besides, Molière had a personal reason for dislike of them, as they had repeatedly proved unable to restore his suffering health.

In 1666 appeared *Le Misanthrope*, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, and a fragment of *Mélicerte*. *Le Misanthrope*, a five-act comedy in verse, is one of Molière's master-pieces. The aim of this play has sometimes been misunderstood. It was not meant to ridicule virtue; what appears ridiculous in the misanthropist Alceste is not his sincerity, but the contrast between his severe principles and his weakness with regard to the coquettish Célimène, and also his delight in finding fault with the world ('je voudrais, m'en coûtât-il grand'chose, Pour la beauté du fait, avoir perdu ma cause', I. 1). There are several things which, in spite of the effective comic scenes and characters of the play, make us hesitate in calling it a comedy: in particular, the painful exhibition of ridiculous elements in an otherwise admirable character, and the unsatisfactory end, which shows us the over-indulgent Philinte obtaining Eliante's hand, while Alceste is determined to retire from the world, 'Et chercher sur la terre un endroit écarté Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté'. It is very probable that *Le Misanthrope* is to a great extent the expression of the author's domestic sorrow: Molière, like Alceste, weak and unfortunate in his love of a flirt, irritable and outspoken, retired at that time or a little later from

Paris to Auteuil for the sake of his health, and also we may suppose in order to live apart from his wife. The idea of *Le Médecin malgré lui*, the model of a comedy of the lower and popular kind, is derived from a medieval French tale. To the sumptuous court-festivities at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in the end of 1666 and the beginning of 1667 Molière contributed several plays, inserted in the grand *Ballet des Muses*. The first of them, the 'comédie pastorale héroïque' *Mélicerte*, suggested by an episode of Mlle de Scudéry's novel *Le grand Cyrus*, was not finished, because Baron, a talented boy whom Molière had adopted and brought up, and who was to act an important part of the play, resented a punishment inflicted on him by Molière's wife and ran away. The two acts which were written are a brilliant proof of Molière's wonderful though not sufficiently appreciated talent for idyllic and lyrical poetry. The second play written by Molière for the *Ballet des Muses* had a still worse fate than *Mélicerte*. He burnt it before his death: but the libretto of the *Ballet des Muses*, which is preserved, has at least saved those parts of the text that had been set to music by the composer Lulli.

The comedy *Le Sicilien* or *L'Amour peintre*, also written for the *Ballet des Muses*, is remarkable by its form. Like *Don Juan*, *George Dandin*, and *L'Avare*, but to a greater extent, it contains blank verses of various length, scattered through its prose, which thereby receives a more poetical and lofty character, well harmonizing with the romantic plot. In 1667 Molière made a new attempt to bring *Le Tartuffe* upon the stage, relying upon a permission which the king had given him before his departure for the Flemish campaign. But the first president of Paris, Lamoignon, prohibited further representations, and the archbishop of Paris forbade the play to be acted or read under pain of excommunication. Molière sent two of his actors to the king with an application in which he was bold enough to threaten, 'Il est très-assuré, Sire, qu'il ne faut plus que je songe à faire des comédies, si les tartuffes ont l'avantage', but the king answered in an evasive way. It was only at the beginning of 1669 that the permission was granted. The play proved

a great success, partly, as Molière's enemies remarked, because of the many attacks to which it had been exposed.

There is no reason to believe that Molière intended to ridicule in *Le Tartuffe* either the Jesuits or the Jansenists. The tendency of the play is more general : it stigmatizes religious hypocrisy wherever it appears. The characters of the play, the selfish and artful impostor Tartuffe, the weak-minded and short-sighted Orgon, and his clear-headed and honest brother Cléante, are admirably drawn. The plot is entirely original and more interesting than those of Molière's two other master-pieces (*Le Misanthrope* and *Les Femmes savantes*). Its weak point is the *dénouement*, which is brought about rather by chance than by the logic of facts. Various details in the structure of the play have been justly admired, especially the exposition, given in the most natural and lively manner by the choleric Mme Pernelle, who finds fault with all her surrounding, and the late appearance (only in the third act) of Tartuffe after our curiosity to see him has been more and more excited by all that we have heard of him.

In 1668 Molière brought out three new plays, *Amphitryon*, *George Dandin*, and *L'Avare*, two of which, namely the first and the last, were suggested by plays of Plautus. *Amphitryon*, written in varying metres, was taken from Plautus's *Amphitruo* and from his French imitator Rotrou's play *Les deux Sosies*. By treating the person of Jupiter with slight irony and that of Amphitryon with evident sympathy and by elevating the characters of Alcmène and of Sosie, Molière has considerably refined an unpleasing subject. He has been reproached for having chosen it at all, and it has been said that he did so in order to allude to or even to celebrate Louis XIV.'s relations to Mme de Montespan, but the former would have been an indiscretion and the latter an impertinence of which we are not justified in accusing the author. It is more likely that he alludes to himself, to the troubles he had had in obtaining permission to act *Le Tartuffe*, and to his submission to the king when he makes the slave Sosie say the following words about masters :

'Vers la retraite en vain la raison nous appelle,
En vain notre dépit quelquefois y consent :

Leur vue a sur notre zèle
 Un ascendant trop puissant,
 Et la moindre faveur d'un coup d'œil caressant
 Nous rengage de plus belle.'

George Dandin was written for court festivities given in celebration of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. As the play, which is a reminiscence of Boccaccio and of Molière's own farce *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, ends with the triumph of selfishness, arrogance, and falsehood, over plain honesty, it leaves a somewhat painful impression, in spite of its numerous amusing scenes and details. The five-act comedy in prose, *L'Avare*, is an imitation of Plautus's *Aulularia*. By introducing new episodes and characters taken from various French and Italian sources, by refining or omitting coarse features of Plautus's characters, and by inculcating through the play a moral lesson, namely, that avarice is incompatible with true love and the harmony of domestic life, Molière has succeeded in far surpassing his original. It has however been justly pointed out that the poet goes almost too far in illustrating his lesson, when he shows us a son despising the malediction of his father whom he finds out to be a heartless usurer.

During the next few years we find Molière chiefly occupied with plays destined for the court. The first of them was the amusing farce *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, which ridicules the stupidity of provincials, the stubbornness of Parisian bourgeois, and the ignorance and arrogance of doctors and lawyers. As in *George Dandin*, cunning triumphs over plain dealing, but as a good cause is served, and as moreover we never lose the feeling of the improbability of the plot and of the exaggeration of most of the characters, our moral sense is hardly shocked and our merriment prevails. In the following year, 1670, two new plays came out, *Les Amants magnifiques* and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*. The former, a 'comédie-ballet', composed for a court-festival conformably to directions given by the king, resembles in many respects the earlier *Princesse d'Elide*, but has the advantage in the truth and nobleness of the characters. The latter, a comedy with musical intermezzos and

ballets, sprightly and laughable in spite of improbabilities in its plot and characters, renews the attacks made in *George Dandin* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* upon citizens pretending to rise above the position assigned to them by birth and education. For the carnival of 1671 Molière composed the 'tragédie-ballet' *Psyché*, but so little time was allowed by the king that he could not do more than draw the plan of the play and write the prologue, first act, and single scenes of the following acts. He entrusted the rest of the dialogue to Pierre Corneille, and the text of the musical parts to Quinault. The music was written by Lulli.

The play, a new proof of Molière's lyrical talent, was written in various metres like *Amphitryon*, and its numerous songs, choruses, ballets and the pomp of costumes and decorations gave it an operatic character. After having been acted at court it was brought out by Molière upon his own stage, and in spite of the considerable expense it caused was a great financial success. In the same year appeared also *Les Fourberies de Scapin* and *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*. *Les Fourberies de Scapin* is an imitation of Terence's *Phormio* and Cyrano de Bergerac's *Le Pédant joué* (composed, it is said, with Molière's assistance). Like *George Dandin* it hurts our moral sense by its conclusion. Its chief figure, Scapin, reminds us of Mascarille in *L'Etourdi*. Though it is superior to Terence's play in a more concentrated intrigue and in clearer-drawn and better-contrasted characters, it keeps the feeble *dénouement* of the original, and suffers from the predominance of the low-comic element partly borrowed from the mountebank Tabarin. It is chiefly with reference to this play that Boileau says Molière would have carried away the prize in his art,

'Si moins ami du peuple, en ses doctes peintures
Il n'eût point fait souvent grimacer ses figures,
Quitté, pour le bouffon, l'agréable et le fin,
Et sans honte à Térence allié Tabarin.
Dans ce sac ridicule où Scapin s'enveloppe,
Je ne reconnais plus l'auteur du Misanthrope.'

(*L'Art Poétique*, III.)

The farce *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* was contributed by

Molière to the great *Ballet des Ballets* performed at court. It is a satire on the pretentious provincial nobility, and is remarkable for the type of the tax-receiver Harpin, which gave Le Sage the idea of his comedy *Turcaret*. In 1672 appeared *Les Femmes savantes*, a play scarcely inferior to *Le Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope*. In its tendency it is related to *Les Précieuses ridicules*. It ridicules the excessive interest in literature and science affected by not a few women of the time, and their mistaken views as to the true vocation of women. It is hardly necessary to observe that Chrysale does not express Molière's views when he approves of his ancestors' opinion, *Qu'une femme en sait toujours assez* Quand la capacité de son esprit se hausse A connaître un pourpoint d'avec un haut-de-chausse' (II. 7). Molière has sufficiently shown in his *L'Ecole des Femmes* that he holds ignorance to be much more a danger than a blessing to women. The characters of Trissotin and Vadius are caricatures of the insignificant and vain poet Cotin, who had dared to attack Molière and Boileau, and the scholar Ménage. The ridiculous sonnet and madrigal so much admired by the learned women were really taken from Cotin's works, and the quarrel arising from wounded vanity between Trissotin and Vadius alluded to the literary skirmish of Cotin and Ménage. It should however be remarked that Cotin, though vain, was not a dishonourable man like Trissotin, who withdraws his demand for Henriette's hand when her parents are supposed to have lost their fortune. The other characters of the play, especially the female ones, are skilfully drawn and true to life, though that of the crazy Bélise may be thought exaggerated, and that of the moralizing Ariste conventional.

Molière's last play was *Le Malade imaginaire*. Different motives seem to have led to its composition. His disbelief in the medical art and his indignation at the ignorance and pretensions of doctors had already caused him to choose this mark for his satire. Besides, he seems to have tried to laugh away his cares about his own health and to cure himself of dejection by self-irony. Also it is not improbable that he wished to counteract by his gay self-caricature the effect of

Boulanger de Chalussay's satirical comedy, *Elomire hypocondre* or *Les Médecins vengés*, published 1670, and intended to awake disgust for the hypochondriac Molière, who is meant by the anagram Elomire. Molière wished to perform his play at court during the carnival festivities, but the king refused it, and preferred Racine's tragedy *Mithridate*. Its original destination accounts however for the music, interludes, and ballets, which accompany it, and for the extravagant buffoonery of the plot and characters. On the 17th of February, the day of the fourth representation of *Le Malade imaginaire*, Molière was suffering more than usual from his cough, so that he could scarcely act his part to the end. When he reached home he was seized with so violent a fit of coughing that a vessel in his lungs burst, which caused his almost immediate death.

As he had died under excommunication, being an actor, the archbishop of Paris would not allow him to be buried with religious rites. All that his widow could obtain by an instant application to the king was, that late at night and without ceremonies the corpse should be brought to the churchyard of Saint Joseph and interred there.

In private life Molière was dignified, reserved, pensive, even melancholy. He was of a kind though irritable temper, generous and charitable to those who wanted his help, but resentful of attacks and offences. When he had become a wealthy man he supported his father in the most delicate and liberal manner, though he himself had been abandoned by him in the needs of his early theatrical career. The help he afforded friends was in many cases poorly rewarded. Racine, whom he had assisted with advice and by acting his first plays on his stage, paid him with ingratitude and faithlessness. The composer Lulli, whom he had pushed in his career and helped on by loans, intrigued against him and caused his privilege of performing vocal and instrumental music on his stage to be restricted. The actor Baron, whom Molière had adopted and brought up, has also been accused of ingratitude. Other friends, such as the poets Boileau and La Fontaine and the painter Mignard, to whom we owe a portrait of the poet, were more faithful to him. In his married life Molière

was unhappy, but the fault was partly his own. In his relations to the king Louis XIV. he was loyal and submissive, but without losing his personal dignity. His praises came from his conviction that the king was the embodiment of France's glory and grandeur. On the other hand the king never withdrew his favour from Molière, though Boileau and Racine enjoyed it in a still higher degree. On different occasions when his interests were threatened or attacked Molière was protected by the king; for instance, when *Les Précieuses ridicules* had been forbidden, when Molière's first theatre was demolished, during the quarrels about *L'Ecole des Femmes*, and during the attacks upon *Le Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*. As a comic actor Molière was very successful. 'Tout parlait en lui', says a contemporary writer, 'et d'un pas, d'un sourire, d'un clin d'œil et d'un remuement de tête, il faisait concevoir plus de choses que le plus grand parleur n'aurait pu dire en une heure'. He acted a great variety of low and high comic parts, Mascarille, Sganarelle, Orgon, Harpagon, Arnolphe, Alceste. In tragic parts he seems to have been less successful. Here his appearance and manner of speaking were against him. His figure was small and square, his face big, his eyes far apart from each other and his brows bushy, his lips thick and his cheek-bones prominent. In his attempts to check the volubility of his tongue he had contracted a hiccup, which he skilfully used in comic parts but which necessarily spoiled the effect of his tragic recitation. Besides, his theory that emphasis should be avoided in tragedy, and his rule 'réciter le plus naturellement qu'il est possible', contradicted the French stage tradition and the taste of the public.

As a playwright Molière excelled by his force of invention and skill of combination. In little more than fourteen years he wrote twenty-nine comedies and farces, seven of which may be called masterpieces, and there is scarcely one the loss of which we should not regret, though the circumstances under which Molière had to write were by no means favourable. Often he had to work in the greatest haste, either by command of the king or for the needs of his company; and the subject of his plays was sometimes prescribed to him. Moreover, he devoted

himself with extreme care to his duties as a stage-manager and as an actor. His health was bad, his domestic troubles weighed heavily upon him, envious writers and actors, offended noblemen and *dévots*, attacked him and intrigued against him. There is none among the various classes of comedy which does not find a worthy representative in the list of his works: the comedy of intrigue (*L'Etourdi*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*), of manners (*Les Précieuses ridicules*, *Les Femmes savantes*), and of character (*Le Misanthrope*, *L'Avaro*), the heroic (*Don Garcie de Navarre*), romantic (*Don Juan*), and pastoral comedy (*Mélicerte*), the 'comédie-ballet' (*Le Mariage forcé*) and 'comédie mêlée de danse et de musique' (*La Princesse d'Elide*), the farce (*Le Médecin malgré lui*), not to mention the extempore plays after the Italian fashion which he wrote in early life (*La Jalousie du Barbouillé*). *Psyché* was called by Molière himself a 'tragédie-ballet'.

Molière availed himself most freely of the works of his predecessors. 'Je prends mon bien où je le trouve' he used to say. He took plots, episodes, scenes, characters, single features, jokes, and witty expressions, from Plautus and Terence, from Italian and Spanish comedies, from French sixteenth and seventeenth century writers, Rabelais, Montaigne, Larivey, Rotrou, Cyrano de Bergerac, Chapuzeau, Scarron, from the buffooneries of mountebanks like Tabarin, and from oral tradition, but exhibited a wonderful skill in combining and adapting to each other these various elements. He gave greater concentration and a general purpose to plots: he refined and modified characters so as to form effective contrasts: he shortened and enlivened prolix scenes. His skill in connecting scenes and in maintaining the attention of the audience, and his *technique* in the construction of his plays have been justly admired, in spite of the unsatisfactory *dénouement* of several plays, brought about by an unexpected lucky chance instead of the natural development of things.

The characters of Molière's plays are of a wonderful variety. There is scarcely a class of society, scarcely a weakness or vice of human nature, that does not appear upon his stage. The remark made by modern critics that his persons are rather

types than characters, that is to say, that they are embodiments of single qualities, is just: but the comedy of character is obliged to a certain extent to lay stress upon some sides of a character and to take little notice of others in order effectively to insinuate its moral lesson. Conventional characters taken from earlier comedy and occurring again and again in Molière's plays, such as cunning valets, forward servants, tyrannical fathers, and faithful lovers, are, with the exception of the latter perhaps, so vividly and amusingly delineated that we do not mind their ubiquity. The purpose of most of Molière's plays is a moral one; but this moral purpose is apt to be misunderstood in several (*Don Juan*, *Le Misanthrope*), and is indeed lacking in others (*Amphitryon*, *George Dandin*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*). Molière's prose is admirably clear, concise and sprightly, and the natural ease of his poetry astonished so severe a critic as Boileau, who addressed to his friend the often-quoted lines,

'Rare et fameux esprit, dont la fertile veine
Ignore en écrivant le travail et la peine;
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Enseigne-moi, Molière, où tu trouves la rime.
On dirait, quand tu veux, qu'elle te vient chercher,
Jamais au bout du vers on ne te voit broncher;
Et, sans qu'un long détour t'arrête, ou t'embarrasse,
A peine as-tu parlé, qu'elle-même s'y place.'

(*Sat.* II.)

It cannot be denied, however, that his poetical style is not entirely free from the affectation, prejudicial to a great part of French seventeenth century poetry, which is wittily ridiculed in *Les Précieuses ridicules*. It is related that Boileau, having been asked by Louis XIV. who was the greatest poet of his age, answered, Molière. There are few people acquainted with French literature who will not adopting Boileau's answer extend it to the whole of French literature, and with Sainte-Beuve reckon Molière's work among the 'cinq ou six grandes œuvres qui sont entrées dans le fonds inaliénable de la pensée humaine'.

LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES.

A comedy of manners such as Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules* cannot be fully appreciated without a certain knowledge of the manners that it attempts to describe or to ridicule. It will therefore be well to cast a glance upon the manners of the society which was the mark of Molière's satire.

The origin of the 'delicate' society must be sought in the custom adopted by the Marquise de Rambouillet at the beginning of the seventeenth century of receiving at her house a select society once a week. The Marquise, a lady who combined sense and high culture with taste and polite manners, abhorred the rudeness and licentiousness which dominated Henri IV.'s court and the tediousness and stiffness of the court of his successor, Louis XIII. Taking as a pretext her delicate health she retired from court life and saw her friends at her own house. Men and women of high and low nobility, prelates and literary men of whatever extraction, the Princess de Condé, the Duchess de Longueville, Richelieu in his earlier years, Voiture, Balzac, Malherbe, Pierre Corneille, the grammarian Vaugelas, frequented her society. Refinement in manners and speech, respect for the dignity of women, gallantry, consideration of merit rather than of birth, were the features which distinguished her circle from the court. The art of conversation in France is said to have begun at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Pedantry was banished from it. Events of daily life at court and in town, questions of language and literature, of morals and of gallantry, were talked about. A slight trace of affectation and subtlety could however be discovered in the society of the Marquise de Rambouillet from the very beginning. She herself was, as a

contemporary relates, 'un peu trop complimenteuse pour certaines gens qui n'en valent pas la peine,.....un peu trop délicate,...cela va dans l'excès'. Her circle cultivated an artificial manner of speaking and writing, in which they imitated the Spanish poet Gongora's bombast and the Italian poet Marini's points. Even Corneille did not keep free from the extravagance of the fashionable style. We find a specimen of it in one of his early poems ('Ode sur un prompt amour') :

'Regards brillants, clartés divines,
 'Qui m'avez tellement surpris ;
 Œillades qui sur les esprits
 Exercez si bien vos rapines,
 Tyrans secrets, auteurs puissants
 D'un esclavage où je consens ;
 Chers ennemis de ma franchise
 Beaux yeux, mes aimables vainqueurs,
 Dites-moi qui vous autorise
 A dérober ainsi les cœurs !

 Que ce larcin m'est favorable !
 Que j'ai sujet d'appréhender,
 La conjurant de le garder,
 Qu'elle me soit inexorable.
 Amour, si jamais ses dédains
 La portent à ce que je crains,
 Fais qu'elle se puisse méprendre ;
 Et qu'aveuglée, au lieu du mien
 Qu'elle aura dessein de me rendre,
 Amynte me donne le sien !'

It will be noticed that Mascarille in *Les Précieuses ridicules* seems to be acquainted with this poem (cf. p. 17, ll. 4—11 ; p. 21, ll. 12—15). Affectation gradually increased, especially under the influence of the daughter of the Marquise de Rambouillet, Julie d'Angennes, and the Marquise de Sablé. The kind of literature which was encouraged by them was of a gallant character, trifling and insignificant: sonnets, madrigals, impromptus, stanzas, quatrains, sixains, riddles. The Duke de Montausier, who adored Julie d'Angennes for thirteen years before

she accepted his hand, presented her in 1641 with the famous 'guirlande de Julie', composed of 62 madrigals, written by the duke and his friends, in each of which a flower offered its homage to her. A work entitled, 'Poésies choisies de MM. Corneille, Benserade.....et de plusieurs autres' to which Madelon in *Les Précieuses ridicules* seems to refer (p. 18, l. 16) was published in 1653 and contained poetry of the light sort above described. Riddles were the speciality of the abbé Cotin ('Recueil des énigmes de ce temps', 1658). Unfortunately he owes his immortality less to them than to the caricature drawn of him by Molière in *Les Femmes savantes*.

To the trifling amusements of the Hôtel de Rambouillet belonged also the adoption of poetical and antique-sounding names. The Marquise de Rambouillet herself had been the first whose Christian name Catherine the poet Malherbe had by an ingenious transposition of the letters changed into Arthénice. Then all her circle took Greek names. Julie d'Angennes became Ménalide, the Marquise de Sablé Stéphanie, the Duke de Montausier Ménalidus. The metamorphosis went even further and extended to names of places: France was called Greece, Paris Athens, the Italian theatre at Paris 'Cirque des Ausoniens'. The animation of the society of the Hôtel de Rambouillet reached its height between 1630 and 1640. After 1645 it gradually became more quiet and serious. Julie d'Angennes left the house of her mother in 1645 and became the wife of the Duke de Montausier; Voiture, who was 'l'âme du rond' according to a contemporary's expression, died in 1648; the husband of the Marquise died in 1653, and her son in 1654. When Molière wrote his *Les Précieuses ridicules* the Hôtel de Rambouillet was little frequented, and its society was scattered in a number of more or less closely connected smaller circles. The affectation of the new societies, the members of which took about 1650 the name of 'Précieux' and 'Précieuses' (the 'refined, delicate ones'), soon reached the height of extravagance and challenged satire. Their pretended disdain of true love stood in curious contrast with their constant discussions of love-casuistry. It is to their

The *Pré-*
cieuses.

society that the following words of Saint-Evremond (written in 1656) refer :

‘ Là, se font distinguer les fiertés des rigueurs ;
 Les dédains des mépris, les tourments des langueurs ;
 On y sait démêler la crainte et les alarmes,
 Discerner les attraits, les appas et les charmes ;
 On y parle du temps qu’on forme le désir :
 Mouvement incertain de peine ou de plaisir.
 Des premiers maux d’amour on connaît la naissance,
 On a de leurs progrès une entière science,
 Et toujours on ajuste à l’ordre des douleurs,
 Et le temps de la plainte, et la saison des pleurs.’

Refinement and delicacy in sentiment and expression were aimed at to excess. Words that appeared prosaic were abhorred, and replaced by metaphorical expressions and ornate paraphrases. It is reported that the ‘Précieuse’ would say instead of ‘le chapeau’ *l’affronteur des temps*, ‘la cheminée’ *l’empire de Vulcan*, ‘les dents’ *l’ameublement de la bouche*, ‘nous allons dîner’ *nous allons donner à la nature son tribut accoutumé*, ‘Mademoiselle une telle a beaucoup d’esprit’ *Mademoiselle une telle est un extrait de l’esprit humain*. Though the greater part of this artificial and ridiculous vocabulary had only a short life, still not a few convenient and expressive idioms apparently invented by the ‘Précieuses’ have remained in the language, e.g. *faire figure dans le monde*, *perdre son sérieux*, *avoir la taille élégante*, *avoir des absences de raison*. A great deal of the amusing effect of Molière’s play is due to the pretentious and stilted language used by the two ‘Précieuses’ and their visitors. An obscure writer, Somaize, had the idea of gathering affected words and phrases from *Les Précieuses ridicules*, and embodying them in his *Grand Dictionnaire des Précieuses* (1660), from which they can easily be separated again (see Appendix).

A strange custom adopted by the ‘Précieuses’, though not invented by them was to receive visitors in their bedroom (‘alcôve’), sitting or lying in full dress upon the bed, which was placed so that, on either side, between it and the

wall of the room, there should be a 'lane' (ruelle). One of the 'ruelles' was destined for the servants, the other for the visitors. In a wider sense the expression 'ruelle' was also used for the society itself which used to frequent the house of a 'Précieuse'. Madeleine de Scudéry was the leader of the 'delicate' society. In her house they assembled every Saturday to discuss questions of language and literature, of love-casuistry and morals, to criticize, recite, and compose poetry. The proceedings of one of these assemblies, of the so-called 'journée des madrigaux' (the 20th of December, 1655), were written down by Conrart and are still preserved. Conrart presented Mlle de Scudéry with a seal of crystal, accompanied by a madrigal. She answered by another madrigal, and every guest had in his turn to contribute a madrigal to the entertainment of the society. A favourite pastime was 'portrait-writing', invented by Mlle de Montpensier and later carried to perfection by La Bruyère, which consisted in giving one's own or another person's physical and moral description. Many such portraits are scattered in Mlle de Scudéry's novels. The one given of herself (written, it is said, not by herself, but by her brother) in the novel *Le grand Cyrus* contains some features which certain details of Madelon's part in *Les Précieuses ridicules* were possibly meant to parody: 'Sapho (the poetical name of Mlle de Scudéry) danse aussi de fort bonne grâce...Mais ce qu'il y a d'admirable, c'est que cette personne qui sait tant de choses différentes, les sait sans faire la savante, sans en avoir aucun orgueil, et sans mépriser celles qui ne les savent pas. En effet, sa conversation est si naturelle, si aisée et si galante, qu'on ne lui entend jamais dire... que des choses qu'on peut croire qu'une personne de grand esprit pourrait dire sans avoir appris tout ce qu'elle sait.....Les plus grands hommes du monde demandaient de ses vers avec empressement...; elle en faisait un si grand mystère, elle les donnait si difficilement, et elle témoignait les estimer si peu, que cela augmentait encore sa gloire.....'.

The influence of Mlle de Scudéry extended not only over her own circle. She was an industrious and clever though

extremely prolix writer. Her novels were read all over France and spread her ideal of social life and manners. It may easily be imagined to what absurdities that ideal led people of inferior rank or education who attempted to carry it out. Six years before Molière wrote *Les Précieuses ridicules* she completed her chief novel *Artamène* or *Le grand*

Her novels.

Cyrus (in ten volumes of 6679 pages altogether), immediately after which she began to publish her second great novel (also in ten volumes) *Clélie* or *Histoire romaine* (i.e. Roman history as it might have looked had ancient society been composed of 'Précieux' and 'Précieuses'; this explains why p. 20, l. 23, Madelon approves of Mascarille's plan to 'mettre en madrigaux toute l'histoire romaine', adding that 'cela sera du dernier beau'). It is evident that the two 'précieuses' of Molière's play are acquainted with both novels, and that their incidents, and what Marotte calls their 'flosie' (see p. 12, ll. 19, 20), have produced a strong impression upon their minds. As typical instances of the situations the following may be mentioned (cf. p. 8, l. 23—p. 9, l. 16): the noble extraction of a hero (Cyrus, Aronce) remains hidden for some time and comes unexpectedly to light, the hero (Cyrus) happens to see his beloved lady (Mandane) in a temple, the heroines (Mandane, Clélie) are carried off, the lover is apparently faithless (Aronce) or dead (Cyrus), rivals cross his plans, the father (Cyaraxe, Clélius) threatens the lover (Cyrus, Aronce) of his daughter (Mandane, Clélie). Only after long difficulties and troubles the marriages take place in the tenth volume of the novels.

Mlle de Scudéry and her friends' views are expounded in numberless and endless conversations on moral, philosophical, and gallant questions, carried on between the heroes and heroines of her novels for the benefit of those readers who wished to become familiar with refined sentiment and language. By the advice of Chapelain, Mlle de Scudéry inserted in the novel of *Clélie* an in-

The *carte de
Tendre.*

vention which she had at first only communicated as a 'jeu d'esprit' to her friends, the famous 'carte de Tendre', 'qui res-

semble tellement à une véritable carte qu'il y a des mers, des rivières, des montagnes, un lac, des villes et des villages'. There were three rivers: Inclination, Estime, Reconnaissance, on each of which lay a town called Tendre, because 'on peut avoir de la tendresse par trois causes différentes: ou par une grande estime, ou par reconnaissance, ou par inclination', and the map showed the road by which the traveller had to go from Nouvelle Amitié to one of the three Tendres. From Nouvelle Amitié to Tendre sur Inclination the way followed the river Inclination without any halting-place; from Nouvelle Amitié to Tendre sur Estime the way led by many villages among which were Grand Esprit, Jolis Vers, Billets Galants, Billets Doux, Sincérité and six other stations; on the way from Nouvelle Amitié to Tendre sur Reconnaissance lay the villages Complaisance, Soumission, Petits Soins, Assiduité, Empressement, and five other places. Travellers to Tendre sur Estime must take care not to go astray, else they would come to places like Négligence, Légèreté, Oubli, leading to the Lac d'Indifférence; on the other hand, travellers to Tendre sur Reconnaissance who left the right way would come to Indiscrétion, Perfidie, Médisance, in the direction of the Mer d'Inimitié. After arriving at Tendre it would not be advisable to follow the rivers Inclination, Estime, Reconnaissance further, for they flowed into the Mer Dangereuse, beyond which there lay Terres Inconnues. From this map, which was sent by Clélie to Herminius, it may be inferred what were Mlle de Scudéry's views of love and marriage. It seemed dangerous to her to go beyond Tendre ('intimate friendship') and accordingly she refused her friends Conrart and Pellisson when they asked for her hand. Madelon in *Les Précieuses ridicules* would like to have her own love-story arranged in pretty much the same style as that of Mandane and Clélie, and her theory of love is in harmony with that expressed in Mlle de Scudéry's novels and the 'carte de Tendre'.

From all that has been said it is obvious that Molière's Madelon not only bears the same name as Madeleine de Scudéry, but also is a close parody of her ideas, manners, and

speech. It is less probable that Cathos is meant to represent the Marquise Catherine de Rambouillet, whose Christian name she bears. Cathos is less declamatory and affects less interest in literature than Madelon: her chief concern is with delicacy and gallantry (cf. p. 10, l. 19—p. 11, l. 3). This would not disagree with what we know of the character of the Marquise: but in 1659 there was little reason to attack one who was in her seventy-first year and led a retired life. The attack would seem more proper if directed against the daughter of the Marquise, Julie d'Angennes, at that time Duchess de Montausier, whom a contemporary (Talleyrand des Réaux, 1660) calls 'un des originaux des Précieuses'. However this may be, Madelon and Cathos, though partly personal caricatures, are besides and chiefly reproductions of the extravagances and absurdities of the whole class of society called 'Précieuses' and of their silly imitators.

Not Madelon and Cathos only, but also Mascarille and Jodelet are instruments of Molière's satire. In them *The galants*, the poet indirectly parodies the 'galants', the fops of the time, the 'marquis', whom he will later on attack directly and not 'avec le masque de Mascarille' (metaphorically understood, cf. note on Mascarille, p. 50). The absurd ideas of genteel behaviour entertained by some of the young noblemen of the time found a curious expression in a pamphlet, *Les Lois de la Galanterie* (published 1644 and again 1658, and reedited by L. Lalanne 1855). A few extracts from that book will serve to show that Mascarille and Jodelet's behaviour is to a great extent regulated according to the advice given in it, and part of its ideas have found their way into the conversation between the two 'Précieuses' and their visitors:—

At the beginning Paris is called 'ville incomparable ou sans pair, de laquelle lorsque les vrais galants sont éloignés, ils se trouveront comme les grands poissons de la mer dans une petite mare où ils ne peuvent nager faute d'eau, si bien que celui qui porte cette dignité ne s'éloignera que le moins possible d'un lieu qui est son vrai élément'. Then follow other pieces of

Personal allusions of *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

advice :...‘(les seigneurs et gentilshommes) ne laisseront pas d’avoir quantité de gens à leur lever qui formeront une grosse cour...

‘De quelque condition que soit un galant nous lui enjoignons d’avoir un carrosse s’il en a le moyen, d’autant que lorsque l’on parle aujourd’hui de quelqu’un qui fréquente les bonnes compagnies, l’on demande incontinent : *A-t-il carrosse ?* et si l’on répond que oui, l’on en fait beaucoup plus d’estime : c’est aussi une chose très-utile à un homme qui veut être dans la bonne réputation d’entretenir un carrosse, voire deux, quand ce ne serait que pour faire plaisir à quelques dames qui n’en ont point, et leur en prêter quelquefois pour leurs promenades et leurs visites, ce qui les oblige de telle sorte que l’on est après beaucoup mieux venu chez elles, et entre les bonnes qualités d’un homme l’on ne manque pas de dire toujours d’abord : *Il a bon carrosse*, ce qui vous met incontinent dans l’honneur et la réputation...

‘C’est aussi une chose infâme de s’être coulé de son pied d’un bout de la ville à l’autre, quand même l’on aurait changé de souliers à la porte, pource que cela vous accuse de quelque pauvreté.....Vous pouvez aussi pour le plus sûr vous faire porter en chaise, dernière et nouvelle commodité si utile qu’ayant été enfermé là-dedans sans se gêner le long des chemins l’on peut dire que l’on en sort aussi propre que si l’on sortait de la boîte d’un enchanteur, et comme elles sont de louage, l’on n’en fait la dépense que quand l’on veut au lieu qu’un cheval mange jour et nuit.....Après que vous serez assis et que vous aurez fait vos premiers compliments...il sera bienséant d’ôter le gant de votre main droite et de tirer de votre poche un grand peigne de corne dont les dents soient fort éloignées l’une de l’autre, et de peigner doucement vos cheveux, soit qu’ils soient naturels ou empruntés...Pour faire l’habile vous nommerez ordinairement tous les savants de Paris et direz qu’ils sont de votre connaissance et qu’ils ne font point d’ouvrage qu’ils ne vous le communiquent pour votre approbation...

‘Pour montrer le crédit que vous avez parmi les gens d’esprit il faut toujours avoir ses pochettes pleines de sonnets, épi-grammes, madrigaux, élégies et autres vers, soit qu’ils soient

satiriques ou sur un sujet d'amour. Par ce moyen vous entretiendrez les compagnies aux dépens d'autrui, lorsque vous n'aurez pas de quoi payer de vous-même... Nul ne peut être dit vrai galant qui de sa vie n'a donné le bal ni la musique...

'S'il y a des mots que l'on ait inventés depuis peu et dont les gens du monde prennent plaisir de se servir, il en faut faire comme des modes nouvelles des habits, quelque bizarrerie que l'on y puisse trouver et quoique les grammairiens et faiseurs de livres les reprennent.'

Neither the idea of ridiculing the society of the 'Précieuses' nor the plot of his play was entirely Molière's own. In particular Scarron, Saint-Evremond, and Furetière satirized that society before him, Scarron in a manner that may even possibly have suggested to Molière certain details of his play. In his second satire, written before 1651, Scarron complains of various kinds of 'fâcheux' (bores),

Predecessors of
Molière.

'Au rang de qui je mets les précieuses,
Fausses s'entend, et de qui tout le bon
Est seulement un langage ou jargon,
Un parler gras, plusieurs sottes manières,
Et qui ne sont enfin que façonnières,
Comme il en est deux ou trois dans Paris,
Que l'on respecte autant que des princesses :
Mais elles font quantité de singesses ;
Et l'on peut dire avecque vérité,
Que leur modèle en a beaucoup gâté.'

Among the bores he reckons also people to whom Mascarille and Jodelet bear an astonishing resemblance :

'Qui beaucoup parle et toujours de son mieux,
Est un fâcheux des plus fastidieux ;
J'entends parler des hommes et des femmes :
Tout ce qu'il dit est pointe d'épigrammes ;
Tout son plaisir est faire compliments,
Tels qu'on en lit dans les plus sots romans.

Un doucereux, magasin de fleurette,

qui . . .

Croirait manquer à sa galanterie,
 S'il ne poussait quelque douceur fleurie,
 Est odieux

Ajoutons-y les réciteurs de vers;
 Ceux qui premiers savent les nouveaux airs
 Et qui partout d'une voix téméraire,
 Osent chanter comme ferait Hilaire;

Les grands seigneurs qui prônent leurs exploits
 Sur grand crédit, leurs importants emplois

Et ceux aussi qui ne font que pester,
 Bien que le sort ne leur soit pas contraire

Un courtisan qui se croit un grand clerc,
 Par la raison qu'il aura le bel air,
 Et qui se croit par la seule lumière
 De son esprit maître en toute matière,

Le franc bourgeois qui fait l'homme de cour,
 Et quand il est chez les gens de la ville,
 Qui dit tout sec, Turenne, Longueville,
 (Se gardant bien de donner du monsieur)
 Le maréchal, le petit commandeur,
 J'étais au cours avecque les comtesses,
 Où je jouais avec telles duchesses,
 Est un fâcheux qui divertit parfois.'

If we are to believe Molière's adversary, Somaize, the *Précieuses ridicules* was only an imitation of a certain play by the abbé de Pure which had been performed by the Italian actors at Paris: 'c'est la même chose, ce sont deux valets tout de même qui se déguisent pour plaire à deux femmes et que leurs maîtres battent à la fin: il y a seulement cette petite différence, que dans la première les valets le font à l'insu de leurs maîtres, et que dans la dernière ce sont eux qui leur font faire'. The play is unfortunately not preserved. Molière himself maintained, according to Somaize, 'n'avoir imité en rien celle des Italiens', and indeed the resemblance between the two plays cannot have

been very striking. What Somaize calls a 'petite différence' is in fact an essential one. Besides de Pure's play was acted 'en langue toscane fort pure', and it may possibly have consisted in a mere canvas, which the Italian actors, as usual, filled up by improvisation. Certainly the whole comic effect produced by the affected phrases of the 'Précieuses' and their visitors must be attributed to Molière's invention.

Les Précieuses ridicules was written in 1659, and first acted together with Corneille's *Cinna* on No-

Success, per-
formances, and
publication of
*Les Précieuses
ridicules.*

vember the 18th of that year. The success which it had is still unforgotten, thanks to anecdotes told in connection with it, one of an old man who during the performance cried out: 'Courage! Molière, voilà la bonne comédie!' and another of Ménage saying to Chapelain when he left the theatre after the first representation of the play: 'Monsieur, nous approuvions vous et moi toutes les sottises qui viennent d'être critiquées si finement et avec tant de bon sens; mais, croyez-moi, pour me servir de ce que saint Remi dit à Clovis, il nous faudra brûler ce que nous avons adoré, et adorer ce que nous avons brûlé.'

The 'delicate' society were fully aware of the ridicule to which Molière's play exposed them, and succeeded in getting the performances stopped. Somaize says in a prediction made *post festum*: 'Elles intéresseront les galants à prendre leur parti. Un alcôviste de qualité interdira ce spectacle pour quelques jours.' After an interval of a fortnight, however, the performances proceeded successfully from December the 2nd till October, 1660, when Molière lost his theatre in the Petit-Bourbon. In the Palais-Royal there were only three representations in 1666.

The influence which Molière's play had upon the manners of his time must not be overrated. The name 'Précieuse' was indeed abandoned after 1659, but affectation of sentiment and language outlived Molière's and also Boileau's satire. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century we find it still reigning in the *ruelle* of Mme Deshoulières and in the works of Fléchier; and in the eighteenth century its traces are obvious in the writings of Lamotte, Fontenelle, Moncrif, Marivaux, Massillon,

and even Montesquieu. It has been supposed without sufficient reason that in the interval between the first and second representations of the play Molière made alterations in it. The argument alleged in favour of this opinion is a letter of Mlle des Jardins giving an analysis of the play which differs in some points from its actual form ; but then Mlle des Jardins remarks herself that her analysis 'n'est faite que sur le rapport d'autrui ; et je crois qu'il est aisé de connaître cette vérité par l'ordre que je tiens dans mon récit ; car il est un peu différent de celui de cette farce'.

Not quite two months after the first performance Molière was surprised to learn that the publisher Ribou had procured the privilege of publishing the play for a period of seven years. Molière had that privilege at once cancelled, but saw himself obliged to have his piece printed. His publisher was G. de
Imitators of Molière. Luynes, who let the two booksellers de Sercy and Barbin take part in his privilege. Soon after the failure of his attempt to bring out a surreptitious edition of *Les Précieuses ridicules*, Ribou published *Les Précieuses ridicules en vers* by Somaize, which is but an insipid versification of Molière's play. Somaize evidently considered the 'Précieuses' a very fruitful subject, for in short intervals he wrote *Les véritables Précieuses*, a trivial comedy, *Le Procès des Précieuses*, another comedy not without a certain interest because of a scene (sc. 12) describing the ruelle of a 'Précieuse', and two dictionaries, of which one, *Le grand Dictionnaire des Précieuses ou la Clef de la langue des ruelles*, contains a collection of affected expressions partly taken from Molière's play, and the other, *Le Grand Dictionnaire des Précieuses historique, poétique, géographique, cosmographique, chronologique et armoirique*, chiefly biographical details of 'Précieux' and 'Précieuses'. Several other French plays and writings, which we may leave unmentioned here, were suggested by *Les Précieuses ridicules*. In England it was partly imitated in the comedies of some more or less known playwrights : Richard Flecknoe's *The Damoiselles à la Mode* (printed 1667), Mrs Aphra Behn's *The False Count* (acted 1682), Thomas Shadwell's *Bury Fair* (acted 1689), and James Miller's *The Man of Taste* (acted 1735).

The present edition of *Les Précieuses ridicules* reproduces the text of a copy of 1660. The text in editions of Molière's works published in his lifetime offers no variants of importance. In 1682 La Grange and Vinot brought out the first complete edition of Molière's works, which is of great importance, because (1) Molière's widow had given her husband's manuscripts to La Grange, a pedantically careful man, who revised the text after them, and (2) La Grange, who from 1659 had belonged to Molière's company and acted a part in *Les Précieuses ridicules*, was familiar with the stage tradition, so that his additions to the text of 1660 give precious information about the form and manner in which the play was acted. The edition of Molière's works which came out in 1734 is of inferior importance, though its attempts at text-correction, its new division of scenes, and its further addition of stage-directions were adopted in most of the subsequent editions.

The text of the play.

PRÉFACE.

C'EST une chose étrange qu'on imprime les gens malgré eux. Je ne vois rien de si injuste, et je pardonnerais toute autre violence plutôt que celle-là.

Ce n'est pas que je veuille faire ici l'auteur modeste, et mépriser par honneur ma comédie. J'offenserais mal à 5 propos tout Paris, si je l'accusais d'avoir pu applaudir à une sottise. Comme le public est le juge absolu de ces sortes d'ouvrages, il y aurait de l'impertinence à moi de le démentir ; et quand j'aurais eu la plus mauvaise opinion du monde de mes *Précieuses ridicules* avant leur représentation, je dois 10 croire maintenant qu'elles valent quelque chose, puisque tant de gens ensemble en ont dit du bien. Mais comme une grande partie des grâces qu'on y a trouvées dépendent de l'action et du ton de voix, il m'importait qu'on ne les dépouillât pas de ces ornements ; et je trouvais que le succès 15 qu'elles avaient eu dans la représentation était assez beau, pour en demeurer là. J'avais résolu, dis-je, de ne les faire voir qu'à la chandelle, pour ne point donner lieu à quelqu'un de dire le proverbe ; et je ne voulais pas qu'elles sautassent du théâtre de Bourbon dans la galerie du Palais. Cepen- 20 dant je n'ai pu l'éviter, et je suis tombé dans la disgrâce de voir une copie dérobée de ma pièce entre les mains des libraires, accompagnée d'un privilège obtenu par surprise. J'ai eu beau crier : "O temps ! ô mœurs !" on m'a fait voir une nécessité pour moi d'être imprimé, ou d'avoir un 25 procès ; et le dernier mal est encore pire que le premier. Il faut donc se laisser aller à la destinée, et consentir à une chose qu'on ne laisserait pas de faire sans moi.

Mon Dieu, l'étrange embarras qu'un livre à mettre au jour, et qu'un auteur est neuf la première fois qu'on l'im- 30

prime ! Encore si l'on m'avait donné du temps, j'aurais pu mieux songer à moi, et j'aurais pris toutes les précautions que Messieurs les auteurs, à présent mes confrères, ont coutume de prendre en semblables occasions. Outre quelque
5 grand seigneur que j'aurais été prendre malgré lui pour protecteur de mon ouvrage, et dont j'aurais tenté la libéralité par une épître dédicatoire bien fleurie, j'aurais tâché de faire une belle et docte préface ; et je ne manque point de livres qui m'auraient fourni tout ce qu'on peut dire de savant sur
10 la tragédie et la comédie, l'étymologie de toutes deux, leur origine, leur définition, et le reste. J'aurais parlé aussi à mes amis, qui pour la recommandation de ma pièce ne m'auraient pas refusé ou des vers français, ou des vers latins. J'en ai même qui m'auraient loué en grec ;
15 et l'on n'ignore pas qu'une louange en grec est d'une merveilleuse efficace à la tête d'un livre. Mais on me met au jour sans me donner le loisir de me reconnaître ; et je ne puis même obtenir la liberté de dire deux mots pour justifier mes intentions sur le sujet de cette comédie. J'aurais
20 voulu faire voir qu'elle se tient partout dans les bornes de la satire honnête et permise ; que les plus excellentes choses sont sujettes à être copiées par de mauvais singes, qui méritent d'être bernés ; que ces vicieuses imitations de ce qu'il y a de plus parfait ont été de tout temps la matière de la
25 comédie ; et que, par la même raison que les véritables savants et les vrais braves ne se sont point encore avisés de s'offenser du Docteur de la comédie et du Capitan, non plus que les juges, les princes et les rois de voir Trivelin, ou quelque autre sur le théâtre, faire ridiculement le juge, le
30 prince ou le roi, aussi les véritables précieuses auraient tort de se piquer lorsqu'on joue les ridicules qui les imitent mal. Mais enfin, comme j'ai dit, on ne me laisse pas le temps de respirer, et M. de Luynes veut m'aller relire de ce pas : à la bonne heure, puisque Dieu l'a voulu !



LES PRÉCIEUSES RIDICULES.

LES PERSONNAGES.

LA GRANGE, }
DU CROISY, } amants rebutés.
GORGIBUS, bon bourgeois.
MADELON, fille de Gorgibus, }
CATHOS, nièce de Gorgibus, } précieuses ridicules.
MAROTTE, servante des Précieuses ridicules.
ALMANZOR, laquais des Précieuses ridicules.
LE MARQUIS DE MASCARILLE, valet de la Grange.
LE VICOMTE DE JODELET, valet de du Croisy.
DEUX PORTEURS DE CHAISE.
VOISINES.
VIOLONS.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE.

LA GRANGE, DU CROISY.

DU CROISY.

Seigneur la Grange...

LA GRANGE.

Quoi?

DU CROISY.

Regardez-moi un peu sans rire.

LA GRANGE.

Eh bien?

DU CROISY.

5 Que dites-vous de notre visite? en êtes-vous fort satisfait?

LA GRANGE.

A votre avis, avons-nous sujet de l'être tous deux?

DU CROISY.

Pas tout à fait, à dire vrai.

LA GRANGE.

Pour moi, je vous avoue que j'en suis tout scandalisé.
10 A-t-on jamais vu, dites-moi, deux pecques provinciales faire plus les renchéries que celles-là, et deux hommes traités avec plus de mépris que nous? A peine ont-elles pu se résoudre à nous faire donner des sièges. Je n'ai jamais vu tant parler à l'oreille qu'elles ont fait entre elles, tant bâiller,
15 tant se frotter les yeux, et demander tant de fois : "Quelle heure est-il?" Ont-elles répondu que oui et non à tout ce

que nous avons pu leur dire ? Et ne m'avouerez-vous pas enfin que, quand nous aurions été les dernières personnes du monde, on ne pouvait nous faire pis qu'elles ont fait ?

DU CROISY.

Il me semble que vous prenez la chose fort à cœur.

LA GRANGE.

Sans doute, j'en l'y prends, et de telle façon, que je veux 5
me venger de cette impertinence. Je connais ce qui nous a fait mépriser. L'air précieux n'a pas seulement infecté Paris, il s'est aussi répandu dans les provinces, et nos donzelles ridicules en ont humé leur bonne part. En un mot, c'est un ambigu de précieuse et de coquette que leur per- 10
sonne. Je vois ce qu'il faut être pour en être bien reçu ; et si vous m'en croyez, nous leur jouerons tous deux une pièce qui leur fera voir leur sottise, et pourra leur apprendre à connaître un peu mieux leur monde.

DU CROISY.

Et comment encore ?

15

LA GRANGE.

J'ai un certain valet, nommé Mascarille, qui passe, au sentiment de beaucoup de gens, pour une manière de bel esprit ; car il n'y a rien à meilleur marché que le bel esprit maintenant. C'est un extravagant, qui s'est mis dans la tête de vouloir faire l'homme de condition. Il se pique ordi- 20
nairement de galanterie et de vers, et dédaigne les autres valets, jusqu'à les appeler brutaux.

DU CROISY.

Eh bien, qu'en prétendez-vous faire ?

LA GRANGE.

Ce que j'en prétends faire ? Il faut... Mais sortons d'ici auparavant.

25

SCÈNE II.

GORGIBUS, DU CROISY, LA GRANGE.

GORGIBUS.

Eh bien, vous avez vu ma nièce et ma fille : les affaires iront-elles bien ? Quel est le résultat de cette visite ?

LA GRANGE.

C'est une chose que vous pourrez mieux apprendre d'elles que de nous. Tout ce que nous pouvons vous dire, 5 c'est que nous vous rendons grâce de la faveur que vous nous avez faite, et demeurons vos très-humbles serviteurs.

GORGIBUS.

Ouais ! il semble qu'ils sortent mal satisfaits d'ici. D'où pourrait venir leur mécontentement ? Il faut savoir un peu ce que c'est. Holà !

SCÈNE III.

MAROTTE, GORGIBUS.

MAROTTE.

10 Que désirez-vous, Monsieur ?

GORGIBUS.

Où sont vos maîtresses ?

MAROTTE.

Dans leur cabinet.

GORGIBUS.

Que font-elles ?

MAROTTE.

De la pommade pour les lèvres. *powder*

GORGIBUS.

C'est trop pommadé. Dites-leur qu'elles descendent. Ces pendardes-là, avec leur pommade, ont, je pense, envie de me ruiner. Je ne vois partout que blancs d'œufs, lait virginal, et mille autres brimborions que je ne connais point. 5 Elles ont usé, depuis que nous sommes ici, le lard d'une douzaine de cochons, pour le moins, et quatre valets vivraient tous les jours des pieds de mouton qu'elles emploient.

SCÈNE IV.

MADELON, CATHOS, GORGIBUS.

GORGIBUS.

Il est bien nécessaire vraiment de faire tant de dépense 10 pour vous graisser le museau. Dites-moi un peu ce que vous avez fait à ces messieurs, que je les vois sortir avec tant de froideur? Vous avais-je pas commandé de les recevoir comme des personnes que je voulais vous donner pour maris?

15

MADELON.

Et quelle estime, mon père, voulez-vous que nous fassions du procédé irrégulier de ces gens-là? *un peu de raison*

CATHOS.

Le moyen, mon oncle, qu'une fille un peu raisonnable se pût accommoder de leur personne?

GORGIBUS.

Et qu'y trouvez-vous à redire?

20

MADÉLON.

La belle galanterie que la leur ! Quoi ? débuter d'abord
par le mariage ! *beginning with tender of marriage*

GORGIBUS.

Et par où veux-tu donc qu'ils débutent ? N'est-ce pas
un procédé dont vous avez sujet de vous louer toutes deux
5 aussi bien que moi ? Est-il rien de plus obligeant que cela ?

MADÉLON.

Ah ! mon père, ce que vous dites là est du dernier
bourgeois. Cela me fait honte de vous ouïr parler de la
sorte, et vous devriez un peu vous faire apprendre le bel air
des choses. *not insignificant*

GORGIBUS. *trash*

10 Je n'ai que faire ni d'air ni de chanson. Je te dis que
le mariage est une chose sainte et sacrée, et que c'est faire
en honnêtes gens que de débiter par là. *beginning with*

MADÉLON.

15 Mon Dieu, que, si tout le monde vous ressemblait, un
roman serait bientôt fini ! La belle chose que ce serait, si
d'abord Cyrus épousait Mandane, et qu'Aronce de plain-
pied fût marié à Clélie ! *beginning with subject*

GORGIBUS.

Que me vient conter celle-ci ? *beginning with*

MADÉLON.

20 Mon père, voilà ma cousine qui vous dira, aussi bien
que moi, que le mariage ne doit jamais arriver qu'après les
autres aventures. Il faut qu'un amant, pour être agréable,
sache débiter les beaux sentiments, pousser le doux, le tendre
et le passionné, et que sa recherche soit dans les formes.
Premièrement, il doit voir au temple, ou à la promenade, ou
dans quelque cérémonie publique, la personne dont il devient

amoureux ; ou bien être conduit fatalement chez elle par un parent ou un ami, et sortir de là tout rêveur et mélancolique. Il cache un temps sa passion à l'objet aimé, et cependant lui rend plusieurs visites, où l'on ne manque jamais de mettre sur le tapis une question galante qui exerce les esprits 5 de l'assemblée. Le jour de la déclaration arrive, qui se doit faire ordinairement dans une allée de quelque jardin, tandis que la compagnie s'est un peu éloignée ; et cette déclaration est suivie d'un prompt courroux, qui paraît à notre rougeur, et qui, pour un temps, bannit l'amant de notre présence. 10 Ensuite il trouve moyen de nous apaiser, de nous accoutumer insensiblement au discours de sa passion, et de tirer de nous cet aveu qui fait tant de peine. Après cela viennent les aventures, les rivaux qui se jettent à la traverse d'une inclination établie, les persécutions des pères, les jalousies 15 conçues sur de fausses apparences, les plaintes, les désespoirs. Voilà comme les choses se traitent dans les belles manières, et ce sont des règles dont, en bonne galanterie, on ne saurait se dispenser. Mais en venir de but en blanc à l'union conjugale, ne faire l'amour qu'en faisant le contrat 20 du mariage, et prendre justement le roman par la queue ! encore un coup, mon père, il ne se peut rien de plus marchand que ce procédé ; et j'ai mal au cœur de la seule vision que cela me fait.

GORGIBUS.

Quel diable de jargon entends-je ici ? Voici bien du 25 haut style.

CATHOS.

En effet, mon oncle, ma cousine donne dans le vrai de la chose. Le moyen de bien recevoir des gens qui sont tout à fait incongrus en galanterie ? Je m'en vais gager qu'ils n'ont jamais vu la carte de Tendre, et que Billets-Doux, 30

Petits-Soins, Billets-Galants et Jolis-Vers sont des terres inconnues pour eux. Ne voyez-vous pas que toute leur personne marque cela, et qu'ils n'ont point cet air qui donne d'abord bonne opinion des gens? Venir en visite amoureuse avec
 5 une jambe toute unie, un chapeau désarmé de plumes, une tête irrégulière en cheveux, et un habit qui souffre une indigence de rubans...! mon Dieu, quels amants sont-ce là! Quelle frugalité d'ajustement et quelle sécheresse de conversation! On n'y dure point, on n'y tient pas. J'ai remar-
 10 qué encore que leurs rabats ne sont pas de la bonne faiseuse, et qu'il s'en faut plus d'un grand demi-pied que leurs hauts-de-chausses ne soient assez larges. *un peu*

GORGIBUS.

Je pense qu'elles sont folles toutes deux, et je ne puis rien comprendre à ce baragouin. Cathos, et vous, Madelon...

MADELON.

15 Eh! de grâce, mon père, défaites-vous de ces noms étranges, et nous appelez autrement.

GORGIBUS.

Comment, ces noms étranges! Ne sont-ce pas vos noms de baptême?

MADELON.

Mon Dieu, que vous êtes vulgaire! Pour moi, un de mes
 20 étonnements, c'est que vous ayez pu faire une fille si spirituelle que moi. A-t-on jamais parlé dans le beau style de Cathos ni de Madelon? et ne m'avouerez-vous pas que ce serait assez d'un de ces noms pour décrier le plus beau roman du monde?

CATHOS.

25 Il est vrai, mon oncle, qu'une oreille un peu délicate pâtit furieusement à entendre prononcer ces mots-là; et le
suffers

nom de Polyxène que ma cousine a choisi, et celui d'Aminte que je me suis donné, ont une grâce dont il faut que vous demeuriez d'accord.

GORGIBUS.

Écoutez, il n'y a qu'un mot qui serve : je n'entends point que vous ayez d'autres noms que ceux qui vous ont 5 été donnés par vos parrains et marraines ; et pour ces messieurs dont il est question, je connais leurs familles et leurs biens, et je veux résolûment que vous vous disposiez à les recevoir pour maris. Je me lasse de vous avoir sur les bras, et la garde de deux filles est une charge un peu trop pesante 10 pour un homme de mon âge.

CATHOS.

Pour moi, mon oncle, tout ce que je vous puis dire, c'est que je treuve le mariage une chose tout à fait choquante.

MADELON.

Souffrez que nous prenions un peu haleine parmi le beau monde de Paris, où nous ne faisons que d'arriver. Laissez- 15 nous faire à loisir le tissu de notre roman, et n'en pressez point tant la conclusion.

GORGIBUS.

Il n'en faut point douter, elles sont *mad* achevées. Encore un coup, je n'entends rien à toutes ces balivernes ; je veux être maître absolu ; et pour trancher toutes sortes de 20 discours, ou vous serez mariées toutes deux avant qu'il soit peu, ou, ma foi ! vous serez religieuses ; j'en fais un bon serment.

SCÈNE V.

CATHOS, MADELON.

CATHOS.

Mon Dieu ! ma chère, que ton père a la forme enfoncée dans la matière ! que son intelligence est épaisse, et qu'il
5 fait sombre dans son âme !

MADELON.

Que veux-tu, ma chère ? J'en suis en confusion pour lui. J'ai peine à me persuader que je puisse être véritablement sa fille, et je crois que quelque aventure, un jour, me viendra développer une naissance plus illustre.

CATHOS.

10 Je le croirais bien ; oui, il y a toutes les apparences du monde ; et pour moi, quand je me regarde aussi...

SCÈNE VI.

MAROTTE, CATHOS, MADELON.

MAROTTE.

Voilà un laquais qui demande si vous êtes au logis, et
15 dit que son maître vous veut venir voir.

MADELON.

Apprenez, sotte, à vous énoncer moins vulgairement. Dites : "Voilà un nécessaire qui demande si vous êtes en commodité d'être visibles."

MAROTTE.

Dame ! je n'entends point le latin, et je n'ai pas appris,
20 comme vous, la filofie dans le Grand Cyre.

MADELON.

L'impertinente ! Le moyen de souffrir cela ? Et qui est-il, le maître de ce laquais ?

MAROTTE.

Il me l'a nommé le marquis de Mascarille.

MADELON.

Ah ! ma chère, un marquis ! Oui, allez dire qu'on nous peut voir. C'est sans doute un bel esprit qui aura oui 5 parler de nous.

CATHOS.

Assurément, ma chère.

MADELON.

Il faut le recevoir dans cette salle basse, plutôt qu'en notre chambre. Ajustons un peu nos cheveux au moins, et soutenons notre réputation. Vite, venez nous tendre ici 10 dedans le conseiller des grâces.

MAROTTE.

Par ma foi, je ne sais point quelle bête c'est là : il faut parler chrétien, si vous voulez que je vous entende.

CATHOS.

Apportez-nous le miroir, ignorante que vous êtes, et gardez-vous bien d'en salir la glace par la communication 15 de votre image.

SCÈNE VII.

MASCARILLE, deux porteurs.

MASCARILLE.

Holà ! porteurs, holà ! Là, là, là, là, là, là. Je pense que ces marauds-là ont dessein de me briser à force de heurter 20 contre les murailles et les pavés.

1. PORTEUR.

Dame ! c'est que la porte est étroite : vous avez voulu aussi que nous soyons entrés jusqu'ici.

MASCARILLE.

Je le crois bien. Voudriez-vous, faquins, que j'exposasse l'embonpoint de mes plumes aux inclémences de la saison
5 pluvieuse, et que j'allasse imprimer mes souliers en boue ? Allez, ôtez votre chaise d'ici.

2. PORTEUR.

Payez-nous donc, s'il vous plaît, Monsieur.

MASCARILLE.

Hem ?

2. PORTEUR.

Je dis, Monsieur, que vous nous donniez de l'argent, s'il
10 vous plaît.

MASCARILLE, *lui donnant un soufflet.*

Comment, coquin, demander de l'argent à une personne de ma qualité !

2. PORTEUR.

Est-ce ainsi qu'on paye les pauvres gens ? et votre qualité nous donne-t-elle à dîner ?

MASCARILLE.

15 Ah ! ah ! ah ! je vous apprendrai à vous connaître ! Ces canailles-là s'osent jouer à moi.

1. PORTEUR, *prenant un des bâtons de sa chaise.*

Ça payez-nous vite !

MASCARILLE.

Quoi ?

I. PORTEUR.

Je dis que je veux avoir de l'argent tout à l'heure.

MASCARILLE.

Il est raisonnable.

I. PORTEUR.

Vite donc !

MASCARILLE.

Oui-da. Tu parles comme il faut, toi ; mais l'autre est un coquin qui ne sait ce qu'il dit. Tiens : es-tu content ? 5

I. PORTEUR.

Non, je ne suis pas content : vous avez donné un soufflet à mon camarade, et...

MASCARILLE.

Doucement. Tiens, voilà pour le soufflet. On obtient tout de moi quand on s'y prend de la bonne façon. Allez, venez me reprendre tantôt pour aller au Louvre, au petit 10
coucher.

SCÈNE VIII.

MAROTTE, MASCARILLE.

MAROTTE.

Monsieur, voilà mes maîtresses qui vont venir tout à l'heure. 15

MASCARILLE.

Qu'elles ne se pressent point : je suis ici posté commodément pour attendre.

MAROTTE.

Les voici.

SCÈNE IX.

MADELON, CATHOS, MASCARILLE, ALMANZOR.

MASCARILLE, *après avoir salué.*

Mesdames, vous serez surprises, sans doute, de l'audace de ma visite ; mais votre réputation vous attire cette
 5 méchante affaire, et le mérite a pour moi des charmes si puissants, que je cours partout après lui.

MADELON.

Si vous poursuivez le mérite, ce n'est pas sur nos terres que vous devez chasser.

CATHOS.

Pour voir chez nous le mérite, il a fallu que vous l'y
 10 ayez amené.

MASCARILLE.

Ah ! je m'^{de mesur de}inscris en faux contre vos paroles. La renommée accuse juste en contant ce que vous valez ; et vous allez faire pic, repic et capot tout ce qu'il y a de galant dans Paris.

MADELON.

15 Votre complaisance pousse un peu trop avant la libéralité de ses louanges ; et nous n'avons garde, ma cousine et moi, de donner de notre sérieux dans le doux de votre flatterie.

CATHOS.

Ma chère, il faudrait faire donner des sièges.

MADELON.

Holà, Almanzor !

ALMANZOR.

20 Madame.

MADELON.

Vite, voiturez-nous ici les commodités de la conversation.

MASCARILLE.

Mais au moins, y a-t-il sûreté ici pour moi ?

CATHOS.

Que craignez-vous ?

MASCARILLE.

Quelque vol de mon cœur, quelque assassinat de ma franchise. Je vois ici des yeux qui ont la mine d'être de 5 fort mauvais garçons, de faire insulte aux libertés, et de traiter une âme de Turc à More. Comment diable, d'abord qu'on les approche, ils se mettent sur leur garde meurtrière ? Ah ! par ma foi, je m'en défie, et je m'en vais gagner au pied, ou je veux caution bourgeoise qu'ils ne me feront point 10 de mal.

MADELON.

Ma chère, c'est le caractère enjoué.

CATHOS.

Je vois bien que c'est un Amilcar.

MADELON.

Ne craignez rien : nos yeux n'ont point de mauvais des-
seins, et votre cœur peut dormir en assurance sur leur 15
prud'homie. *innocence*

CATHOS.

Mais de grâce, Monsieur, ne soyez pas inexorable à ce
fauteuil qui vous tend les bras il y a un quart d'heure ; con-
tentez un peu l'envie qu'il a de vous embrasser. *Voilà.*

MASCARILLE, *après s'être peigné et avoir ajusté ses canons.*

Eh bien, Mesdames, que dites-vous de Paris ?

MADELON.

Hélas ! qu'en pourrions-nous dire ? Il faudrait être l'antipode de la raison, pour ne pas confesser que Paris est le grand bureau des merveilles, le centre du bon goût, du bel esprit et de la galanterie.

MASCARILLE.

5 Pour moi, je tiens que hors de Paris, il n'y a point de salut pour les honnêtes gens.

CATHOS.

C'est une vérité incontestable.

MASCARILLE.

Il y fait un peu crotté ; mais nous avons la chaise.

MADELON.

Il est vrai que la chaise est un retranchement merveilleux ^{retranchement} 10 lieux contre les insultes de la boue et du mauvais temps.

MASCARILLE.

Vous recevez beaucoup de visites : quel bel esprit est des vôtres ?

MADELON.

Hélas ! nous ne sommes pas encore connues ; mais nous sommes en passe de l'être, et nous avons une amie particulière qui nous a promis d'amener ici tous ces messieurs du 15 *Recueil des pièces choisies*.

CATHOS.

Et certains autres qu'on nous a nommés aussi pour être les arbitres souverains des belles choses.

MASCARILLE.

C'est moi qui ferai votre affaire mieux que personne : ils 20 me rendent tous visite ; et je puis dire que je ne me lève jamais sans une demi-douzaine de beaux esprits.

MADELON.

Eh ! mon Dieu, nous vous serons obligées de la dernière obligation, si vous nous faites cette amitié ; car enfin il faut avoir la connaissance de tous ces messieurs-là, si l'on veut être du beau monde. Ce sont ceux qui donnent le branle à la réputation dans Paris, et vous savez qu'il y en a tel dont ⁵ il ne faut que la seule fréquentation pour vous donner bruit de connaissance, quand il n'y aurait rien autre chose que cela. Mais pour moi, ce que je considère particulièrement, c'est que, par le moyen de ces visites spirituelles, on est instruite de cent choses qu'il faut savoir de nécessité, et qui ¹⁰ sont de l'essence d'un bel esprit. On apprend par là chaque jour les petites nouvelles galantes, les jolis commerces de prose et de vers. On sait à point nommé : " Un tel a composé la plus jolie pièce du monde sur un tel sujet ; une telle a fait des paroles sur un tel air ; Monsieur un tel écrivit hier ¹⁵ au soir un sixain à Mademoiselle une telle, dont elle lui a envoyé la réponse ce matin sur les huit heures ; un tel auteur a fait un tel dessein ; celui-là en est à la troisième partie de son roman ; cet autre met ses ouvrages sous la presse." C'est là ce qui vous fait valoir dans les compagnies ; ²⁰ et si l'on ignore ces choses, je ne donnerais pas un clou de tout l'esprit qu'on peut avoir.

CATHOS.

En effet, je trouve que c'est renchérir sur le ridicule, qu'une personne se pique d'esprit et ne sache pas jusqu'au moindre petit quatrain qui se fait chaque jour ; et pour moi, ²⁵ j'aurais toutes les hontes du monde s'il fallait qu'on vînt à me demander si j'aurais vu quelque chose de nouveau que je n'aurais pas vu.

MASCARILLE.

Il est vrai qu'il est honteux de n'avoir pas des premiers tout ce qui se fait ; mais ne vous mettez pas en peine : je veux établir chez vous une Académie de beaux esprits, et je vous promets qu'il ne se fera pas un bout de vers dans
5 Paris que vous ne sachiez par cœur avant tous les autres. Pour moi, tel que vous me voyez, je m'en escrime un peu quand je veux ; et vous verrez courir de ma façon, dans les belles ruelles de Paris, deux cents chansons, autant de sonnets, quatre cents épigrammes et plus de mille madrigaux,
10 sans compter les énigmes et les portraits.

MADELON.

Je vous avoue que je suis furieusement pour les portraits ; je ne vois rien de si galant que cela.

MASCARILLE.

Les portraits sont difficiles, et demandent un esprit profond : vous en verrez de ma manière qui ne vous déplairont
15 pas.

CATHOS.

Pour moi, j'aime terriblement les énigmes.

MASCARILLE.

Cela exerce l'esprit, et j'en ai fait quatre encore ce matin, que je vous donnerai à deviner.

MADELON.

Les madrigaux sont agréables, quand ils sont bien
20 tournés.

MASCARILLE.

C'est mon talent particulier ; et je travaille à mettre en madrigaux toute l'histoire romaine.

MADELON.

Ah ! certes, cela sera du dernier beau. J'en retiens un
exemplaire au moins, si vous le faites imprimer.

MASCARILLE.

Je vous en promets à chacune un, et des mieux reliés.
Cela est au-dessous de ma condition ; mais je le fais seulement pour donner à gagner aux libraires qui me persécutent.

MADELON.

Je m'imagine que le plaisir est grand de se voir imprimé.

MASCARILLE.

Sans doute. Mais à propos, il faut que je vous die un im- 5
promptu que je fis hier chez une duchesse de mes amies
que je fus visiter ; car je suis diablement fort sur les im-
promptus.

CATHOS.

L'impromptu est justement la pierre de touche de l'esprit.

MASCARILLE.

Écoutez donc.

10

MADELON.

Nous y sommes de toutes nos oreilles.

MASCARILLE.

*Oh, oh ! je n'y prenais pas garde :
Tandis que, sans songer à mal, je vous regarde,
Votre œil en tapinois me dérobe mon cœur ;
Au voleur, au voleur, au voleur, au voleur !*

15

CATHOS.

Ah ! mon Dieu ! voilà qui est poussé dans ^{un qu'on a ga-} le dernier
galant.

MASCARILLE.

Tout ce que je fais a l'air cavalier ; cela ne sent point le
pédant.

MADELON.

Il en est éloigné de plus de deux mille lieues.

20

MASCARILLE.

Avez-vous remarqué ce commencement : *Oh, oh!* Voilà qui est extraordinaire : *oh, oh!* Comme un homme qui s'avise tout d'un coup : *oh, oh!* La surprise : *oh, oh!*

MADELON.

Oui, je trouve ce *oh, oh!* admirable.

MASCARILLE.

5 Il semble que cela ne soit rien.

CATHOS.

Ah! mon Dieu, que dites-vous? Ce sont là de ces sortes de choses qui ne se peuvent payer.

MADELON.

Sans doute; et j'aimerais mieux avoir fait ce *oh, oh!* qu'un poëme épique.

MASCARILLE.

10 Tudieu! vous avez le goût bon.

MADELON.

Eh! je ne l'ai pas tout à fait mauvais.

MASCARILLE.

Mais n'admirez-vous pas aussi *je n'y prenais pas garde?* *Je n'y prenais pas garde*, je ne m'apercevais pas de cela : *façon de parler naturelle : je n'y prenais pas garde.* Tandis
15 *que sans songer à mal*, tandis qu'innocemment, sans malice, comme un pauvre mouton, *je vous regarde*, c'est-à-dire, je m'amuse à vous considérer, je vous observe, je vous contemple; *Votre œil en tapinois...* Que vous semble de ce mot tapinois? n'est-il pas bien choisi?

CATHOS.

20 Tout à fait bien.

MASCARILLE.

Tapinois, en cachette : il semble que ce soit un chat qui vienne de prendre une souris : tapinois.

MADELON.

Il ne se peut rien de mieux.

MASCARILLE.

Me dérobe mon cœur, me l'emporte, me le ravit. Au voleur, au voleur, au voleur, au voleur ! Ne diriez-vous pas 5 que c'est un homme qui crie et court après un voleur pour le faire arrêter? *Au voleur, au voleur, au voleur, au voleur !*

MADELON.

Il faut avouer que cela a un tour spirituel et galant.

MASCARILLE.

Je veux vous dire l'air que j'ai fait dessus.

10

CATHOS.

Vous avez appris la musique ?

MASCARILLE.

Moi ? Point du tout.

CATHOS.

Et comment donc cela se peut-il ?

MASCARILLE.

Les gens de qualité savent tout sans avoir jamais rien appris.

15

MADELON.

Assurément, ma chère.

MASCARILLE.

Écoutez si vous trouverez l'air à votre goût. *Hem, hem. La, la, la, la, la.* La brutalité de la saison a furieusement

outragé la délicatesse de ma voix ; mais il n'importe, c'est à la cavalière. (*Il chante :*)

Oh, oh ! je n'y prenais pas.....

CATHOS.

Ah ! que voilà un air qui est passionné ! Est-ce qu'on n'en meurt point ?

MADELON.

Il y a de la chromatique là dedans.

MASCARILLE.

Ne trouvez-vous pas la pensée bien exprimée dans le chant ? *Au voleur !.....* Et puis, comme si l'on criait bien fort : *au, au, au, au, au, au, au voleur !* Et tout d'un coup, comme une personne essouffée : *au voleur !*

MADELON.

C'est là savoir le fin des choses, le grand fin, le fin du fin. Tout est merveilleux, je vous assure ; je suis enthousiasmée de l'air et des paroles.

CATHOS.

Je n'ai encore rien vu de cette force-là.

MASCARILLE.

15 Tout ce que je fais me vient naturellement, c'est sans étude.

MADELON.

La nature vous a traité en vraie mère passionnée, et vous en êtes l'enfant gâté.

MASCARILLE.

A quoi donc passez-vous le temps ?

CATHOS.

20 A rien du tout.

MADELON. *lit. - fasting = lack of*

Nous avons été jusqu'ici dans un jeûne effroyable de divertissements.

MASCARILLE.

Je m'offre à vous mener l'un de ces jours à la comédie, si vous voulez; aussi bien on en doit jouer une nouvelle que je serai bien aise que nous voyions ensemble.

MADELON.

Cela n'est pas de refus.

MASCARILLE.

Mais je vous demande d'applaudir comme il faut, quand nous serons là; car je me suis engagé de faire valoir la pièce, et l'auteur m'en est venu prier encore ce matin. C'est la coutume ici qu'à nous autres gens de condition les auteurs viennent lire leurs pièces nouvelles, pour nous engager à les trouver belles, et leur donner de la réputation; et je vous laisse à penser si, quand nous disons quelque chose, le parterre ose nous contredire. Pour moi, j'y suis fort exact; et quand j'ai promis à quelque poète, je crie toujours: "Voilà qui est beau," devant que les chandelles soient allumées.

MADELON.

Ne m'en parlez point: c'est un admirable lieu que Paris; il s'y passe cent choses tous les jours qu'on ignore dans les provinces, quelque spirituelle qu'on puisse être.

CATHOS.

C'est assez: puisque nous sommes instruites, nous ferons notre devoir de nous écrire comme il faut sur tout ce qu'on dira.

MASCARILLE.

Je ne sais si je me trompe, mais vous avez toute la mine d'avoir fait quelque comédie.

MADELON.

Eh! il pourrait être quelque chose de ce que vous dites.

MASCARILLE.

Ah! ma foi, il faudra que nous la voyions. Entre nous, j'en ai composé une que je veux faire représenter.

CATHOS.

Hé, à quels comédiens la donnerez-vous?

MASCARILLE.

5 Belle demande! Aux grands comédiens. Il n'y a qu'eux qui soient capables de faire valoir les choses; les autres sont des ignorants qui récitent comme l'on parle; ils ne savent pas faire ronfler les vers, et s'arrêter au bel endroit: et le
 10 moyen de connaître où est le beau vers, si le comédien ne s'y arrête, et ne vous avertit par là qu'il faut faire le brouhaha?

CATHOS.

En effet, il y a manière de faire sentir aux auditeurs les beautés d'un ouvrage; et les choses ne valent que ce qu'on les fait valoir.

MASCARILLE.

15 Que vous semble de ma ^{reasons of dress} petite-oie? La trouvez-vous congruante à l'habit?

CATHOS.

Tout à fait.

MASCARILLE.

Le ruban est bien choisi.

MADELON.

Furieusement bien. C'est Perdrigeon tout pur.

MASCARILLE.

20 Que dites-vous de mes canons?

MADELON.

Ils ont tout à fait bon air.

MASCARILLE.

Je puis me vanter au moins qu'ils ont un grand quartier plus que tous ceux qu'on fait.

MADELON.

Il faut avouer que je n'ai jamais vu porter si haut l'élégance de l'ajustement.

5

MASCARILLE.

Attachez un peu sur ces gants la réflexion de votre odorat.

MADELON.

Ils sentent terriblement bon.

CATHOS.

Je n'ai jamais respiré une odeur mieux conditionnée.

MASCARILLE.

Et celle-là? *(hoir...)*

10

MADELON.

Elle est tout à fait de qualité; le sublime en est touché délicieusement.

MASCARILLE.

Vous ne me dites rien de mes plumes: comment les trouvez-vous?

CATHOS.

Effroyablement belles.

15

MASCARILLE.

Savez-vous que le brin me coûte un louis d'or? Pour moi, j'ai cette manie de vouloir donner généralement sur tout ce qu'il y a de plus beau.

MADELON.

Je vous assure que nous sympathisons vous et moi : j'ai une délicatesse furieuse pour tout ce que je porte ; et jusqu'à mes chaussettes, je ne puis rien souffrir qui ne soit de la bonne ouvrière.

MASCARILLE, *s'écriant brusquement.*

5 Ahi, ahi, ahi, doucement ! Dieu me damne, Mesdames, c'est fort mal en user ; j'ai à me plaindre de votre procédé ; cela n'est pas honnête.

CATHOS.

Qu'est-ce donc ? qu'avez-vous ?

MASCARILLE.

Quoi ? toutes deux contre mon cœur, en même temps !
10 m'attaquer à droit et à gauche ! Ah ! c'est contre le droit des gens ; la partie n'est pas égale ; et je m'en vais crier au meurtre.

CATHOS.

Il faut avouer qu'il dit les choses d'une manière particulière.

MADELON.

15 Il a un tour admirable dans l'esprit.

CATHOS.

Vous avez plus de peur que de mal, et votre cœur crie avant qu'on l'écorche.

MASCARILLE.

Comment diable ! il est écorché depuis la tête jusqu'aux
pieds.

SCÈNE X.

MAROTTE, MASCARILLE, CATHOS, MADELON.

MAROTTE.

Madame, on demande à vous voir.

MADELON.

Qui ?

MAROTTE.

Le vicomte de Jodelet.

5

MASCARILLE.

Le vicomte de Jodelet ?

MAROTTE.

Oui, Monsieur.

CATHOS.

Le connaissez-vous ?

MASCARILLE.

C'est mon meilleur ami.

MADELON.

Faites entrer vite.

10

MASCARILLE.

Il y a quelque temps que nous ne nous sommes vus, et je suis ravi de cette aventure.

CATHOS.

Le voici.

SCÈNE XI.

JODELET, MASCARILLE, CATHOS, MADELON,
MAROTTE.

15

MASCARILLE.

Ah ! vicomte !

JODELET, *s'embrassant l'un l'autre.*

Ah ! marquis !

MASCARILLE.

Que je suis aise de te rencontrer !

JODELET.

Que j'ai de joie de te voir ici !

MASCARILLE.

Baise-moi donc encore un peu, je te prie.

MADOLON.

5 Ma toute bonne, nous commençons d'être connues ;
voilà le beau monde qui prend le chemin de nous venir
voir.

MASCARILLE.

Mesdames, agréez que je vous présente ce gentilhomme-
ci : sur ma parole, il est digne d'être connu de vous.

JODELET.

10 Il est juste de venir vous rendre ce qu'on vous doit ;
et vos attraits exigent leurs droits seigneuriaux sur toutes
sortes de personnes.

MADOLON.

C'est pousser vos civilités jusqu'aux derniers confins de
la flatterie.

CATHOS.

15 Cette journée doit être marquée dans notre almanach
comme une journée bienheureuse.

MADOLON.

Allons, petit garçon, faut-il toujours vous répéter les
choses ? Voyez-vous pas qu'il faut le surcroît d'un fau-
teuil ?

MASCARILLE.

Ne vous étonnez pas de voir le Vicomte de la sorte : il ne fait que sortir d'une maladie qui lui a rendu le visage pâle comme vous le voyez.

JODELET.

Ce sont fruits des veilles de la cour et des fatigues de la guerre.

5

MASCARILLE.

Savez-vous, Mesdames, que vous voyez dans le Vicomte un des vaillants hommes du siècle ? C'est un brave à trois poils.

JODELET.

Vous ne m'en devez rien, Marquis ; et nous savons ce que vous savez faire aussi.

10

MASCARILLE.

Il est vrai que nous nous sommes vus tous deux dans l'occasion.

JODELET.

Et dans des lieux où il faisait fort chaud.

MASCARILLE, *les regardant toutes deux.*

Oui ; mais non pas si chaud qu'ici. Hai, hai, hai !

JODELET.

Notre connaissance s'est faite à l'armée ; et la première 15 fois que nous nous vîmes, il commandait un régiment de cavalerie sur les galères de Malte.

MASCARILLE.

Il est vrai ; mais vous étiez pourtant dans l'emploi avant que j'y fusse ; et je me souviens que je n'étais que petit officier encore, que vous commandiez deux mille chevaux. 20

JODELET.

La guerre est une belle chose ; mais, ma foi, la cour récompense bien mal aujourd'hui les gens de service comme nous.

MASCARILLE.

C'est ce qui fait que je veux pendre l'épée au croc.

CATHOS.

5 Pour moi, j'ai un furieux tendre pour les hommes d'épée.

MADELON.

Je les aime aussi ; mais je veux que l'esprit assaisonne la bravoure.

MASCARILLE.

Te souvient-il, Vicomte, de cette demi-lune que nous emportâmes sur les ennemis au siège d'Arras ?

JODELET.

10 Que veux-tu dire avec ta demi-lune ? C'était bien une lune toute entière.

MASCARILLE.

Je pense que tu as raison.

JODELET.

Il m'en doit bien souvenir, ma foi : j'y fus blessé à la jambe d'un coup de grenade, dont je porte encore les 15 marques. Tâtez un peu, de grâce ; vous sentirez quelque coup, c'était là.

CATHOS.

Il est vrai que la cicatrice est grande.

MASCARILLE.

Donnez-moi un peu votre main, et tâtez celui-ci, là, justement au derrière de la tête : y êtes-vous ?

MADELON.

Oui : je sens quelque chose.

MASCARILLE.

C'est un coup de mousquet que je reçus la dernière
campagne que j'ai faite.

JODELET.

Voici un autre coup qui me perça de part en part à
l'attaque de Gravelines.

5

MASCARILLE.

Je vais vous montrer une furieuse plaie.

MADELON.

Il n'est pas nécessaire : nous le croyons sans y regarder.

MASCARILLE.

Ce sont des marques honorables, qui font voir ce qu'on
est.

CATHOS.

Nous ne doutons point de ce que vous êtes.

10

MASCARILLE.

Vicomte, as-tu là ton carrosse ?

JODELET.

Pourquoi ?

MASCARILLE.

Nous mènerions promener ces dames hors des portes,
et leur donnerions un cadeau.

MADELON.

Nous ne saurions sortir aujourd'hui.

15

MASCARILLE.

Ayons donc les violons pour danser.

JODELET.

Ma foi, c'est bien avisé.

MADELON.

Pour cela, nous y consentons; mais il faut donc quelque surcroît de compagnie.

MASCARILLE.

Holà! Champagne, Picard, Bourguignon, Casquaret,
5 Basque, la Verduze, Lorrain, Provençal, la Violette! Au diable soient tous les laquais! Je ne pense pas qu'il y ait gentilhomme en France plus mal servi que moi. Ces canailles me laissent toujours seul.

MADELON.

Almanzor, dites aux gens de Monsieur qu'ils aillent
10 querir des violons, et nous faites venir ces messieurs et ces dames d'ici près, pour peupler la solitude de notre bal.

MASCARILLE.

Vicomte, que dis-tu de ces yeux?

JODELET.

Mais toi-même, Marquis, que t'en semble?

MASCARILLE.

Moi, je dis que nos libertés auront peine à sortir d'ici
15 les braies nettes. Au moins, pour moi, je reçois d'étranges secousses, et mon cœur ne tient plus qu'à un filet.

MADELON.

Que tout ce qu'il dit est naturel! Il tourne les choses le plus agréablement du monde.

CATHOS.

Il est vrai qu'il fait une furieuse dépense en esprit.

MASCARILLE.

20 Pour vous montrer que je suis véritable, je veux faire un impromptu là-dessus.

CATHOS.

Eh ! je vous en conjure de toute la dévotion de mon cœur : que nous ayons quelque chose qu'on ait fait pour nous.

JODELET.

J'aurais envie d'en faire autant ; mais je me treuve un peu incommodé de la veine poétique, pour la quantité des saignées que j'y'ai faites ces jours passés.

MASCARILLE.

Que diable est cela ? Je fais toujours bien le premier vers ; mais j'ai peine à faire les autres. Ma foi, ceci est un peu trop pressé : je vous ferai un impromptu à loisir, que vous trouverez le plus beau du monde.

JODELET.

Il a de l'esprit comme un démon.

MADELON.

Et du galant, et du bien tourné.

MASCARILLE.

Vicomte, dis-moi un peu, y a-t-il longtemps que tu n'as vu la Comtesse ?

JODELET.

Il y a plus de trois semaines que je ne lui ai rendu visite.

MASCARILLE.

Sais-tu bien que le Duc m'est venu voir ce matin, et m'a voulu mener à la campagne courir un cerf avec lui ?

MADELON.

Voici nos amies qui viennent.

SCÈNE XII.

JODELET, MASCARILLE, CATHOS, MADELON,
MAROTTE, LUCILE.

MADELON.

Mon Dieu, mes chères, nous vous demandons pardon.
5 Ces messieurs ont eu fantaisie de nous donner les âmes des
pieds ; et nous vous avons envoyé querir pour remplir les
vuides de notre assemblée.

LUCILE.

Vous nous avez obligées, sans doute.

MASCARILLE.

Ce n'est ici qu'un bal à la hâte ; mais l'un de ces jours
10 nous vous en donnerons un dans les formes. Les violons
sont-ils venus ?

ALMANZOR.

Oui, Monsieur ; ils sont ici.

CATHOS.

Allons donc, mes chères, prenez place.

MASCARILLE, *dansant lui seul comme par prélude.*

La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

MADELON.

15 Il a tout à fait la taille élégante.

CATHOS.

Et a la mine de danser proprement.

MASCARILLE, *ayant pris Madelon.*

Ma franchise va danser la courante aussi bien que
mes pieds. En cadence, violons, en cadence. Oh ! quels
ignorants ! Il n'y a pas moyen de danser avec eux. Le

diable vous emporte ! ne sauriez-vous jouer en mesure ?
La, la, la, la, la, la, la. Ferme, ô violons de village.

JODELET, *dansant ensuite.*

Holà ! ne pressez pas si fort la cadence : je ne fais que
sortir de maladie.

SCÈNE XIII. 5

DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, MASCARILLE.

LA GRANGE.

Ah ! ah ! coquins, que faites-vous ici ? Il y a trois
heures que nous vous cherchons.

MASCARILLE, *se sentant battre.*

Ahy ! ahy ! ahy ! vous ne m'aviez pas dit que les coups
en seraient aussi. 10

JODELET.

Ahy ! ahy ! ahy !

LA GRANGE.

C'est bien à vous, infâme que vous êtes, à vouloir faire
l'homme d'importance.

DU CROISY.

Voilà qui vous apprendra à vous connaître.

(Ils sortent.) 15

SCÈNE XIV.

MASCARILLE, JODELET, CATHOS, MADELON.

MADELON.

Que veut donc dire ceci ?

JODELET.

C'est une gageure. *wager*

CATHOS.

Quoi? vous laisser battre de la sorte!

MASCARILLE.

seem to take notice of it
Mon Dieu, je n'ai pas voulu faire semblant de rien;
car je suis violent, et je me serais emporté.

MADELON.

5 Endurer un affront comme celui-là, en notre présence!

MASCARILLE.

Ce n'est rien: ne laissons pas d'achever. Nous nous
connaissons il y a longtemps; et entre amis, on ne va pas
se piquer pour si peu de chose.

SCÈNE XV.

10 DU CROISY, LA GRANGE, MASCARILLE, JODELET,
MADELON, CATHOS.

LA GRANGE.

Ma foi, maraude, vous ne vous rirez pas de nous, je
vous promets. Entrez, vous autres.

MADELON.

15 Quelle est donc cette audace, de venir nous troubler
de la sorte dans notre maison?

DU CROISY.

Comment, Mesdames, nous endurerons que nos laquais
soient mieux reçus que nous? qu'ils viennent vous faire
l'amour à nos dépens, et vous donnent le bal?

MADELON.

Vos laquais ?

LA GRANGE.

Oui, nos laquais : et cela n'est ni beau ni honnête de nous les débaucher comme vous faites.

MADELON.

O Ciel ! quelle insolence !

LA GRANGE.

Mais ils n'auront pas l'avantage de se servir de nos 5 habits pour vous donner dans la vue ; et si vous les voulez aimer, ce sera, ma foi, pour leurs beaux yeux. Vite, qu'on les dépouille sur-le-champ.

JODELET.

*Sonne 40*Adieu notre braverie. *grange*

MASCARILLE.

Voilà le marquisat et la vicomté à bas.

10

DU CROISY.

Ha ! ha ! coquins, vous avez l'audace d'aller sur nos brisées ! Vous irez chercher autre part de quoi vous rendre agréables aux yeux de vos belles, je vous en assure.

LA GRANGE.

C'est trop que de nous supplanter, et de nous supplanter avec nos propres habits.

15

MASCARILLE.

O Fortune, quelle est ton inconstance !

DU CROISY.

Vite, qu'on leur ôte jusqu'à la moindre chose.

LA GRANGE. *attive*

Qu'on emporte toutes ces hardes, dépêchez. Maintenant, Mesdames, en l'état qu'ils sont, vous pouvez continuer

vos amours avec eux tant qu'il vous plaira ; nous vous laissons toute sorte de liberté pour cela, et nous vous protestons, Monsieur et moi, que nous n'en serons aucunement jaloux.

CATHOS.

5 Ah ! quelle confusion !

MADELON.

Je crève de dépit.

VOLONS, *au Marquis.*

Qu'est-ce donc que ceci ? Qui nous payera, nous autres ?

MASCARILLE.

Demandez à Monsieur le Vicomte.

VOLONS, *au Vicomte.*

10 Qui est-ce qui nous donnera de l'argent ?

JODELET.

Demandez à Monsieur le Marquis.

SCÈNE XVI.

GORGIBUS, MASCARILLE, MADELON.

GORGIBUS.

Ah ! coquines que vous êtes, vous nous mettez dans
15 de beaux draps blancs, à ce que je vois ! et je viens d'ap-
prendre de belles affaires, vraiment, de ces messieurs qui
sortent !

MADELON.

Ah ! mon père, c'est une pièce ^{cruel} sanglante qu'ils nous ont
faite.

GORGIBUS.

Oui, c'est une pièce sanglante, mais qui est un effet de votre impertinence, infâmes ! Ils se sont ressentis du traitement que vous leur avez fait ; et cependant, malheureux que je suis, il faut que je boive l'affront.

MADELON.

Ah ! je jure que nous en serons vengées, ou que je mourrai en la peine. Et vous, marauds, osez-vous vous tenir ici après votre insolence ?

MASCARILLE.

Traiter comme cela un marquis ! Voilà ce que c'est que du monde ! la moindre disgrâce nous fait mépriser de ceux qui nous chérissaient. Allons, camarade, allons chercher fortune autre part : je vois bien qu'on n'aime ici que la vaine apparence, et qu'on n'y considère point la vertu toute nue.

(Ils sortent tous deux.)

SCÈNE XVII.

15

GORGIBUS, MADELON, CATHOS, violons.

VIOLONS.

Monsieur, nous entendons que vous nous contentiez à leur défaut pour ce que nous avons joué ici.

GORGIBUS, *les battant.*

Oui, oui, je vous vais contenter, et voici la monnaie dont je vous veux payer. Et vous, pendardes, je ne sais qui me tient que je ne vous en fasse autant. Nous allons servir de fable et de risée à tout le monde, et voilà ce

que vous vous êtes attiré par vos extravagances. Allez
vous cacher, vilaines ; allez vous cacher pour jamais. Et
vous qui êtes cause de leur folie, sottes billevesées,
pernicieux amusements des esprits oisifs, romans, vers,
5 chansons, sonnets et sonnettes, puissiez-vous être à tous les
diables !

NOTES.

PAGE I.

PRÉFACE.

1. 8. *il y aurait de l'impertinence à moi.* The dative is put with *il y a* and a noun just as with *c'est* and an adjective or noun, and the meaning of both idioms is identical (*il y aurait de l'impertinence à moi* = *ce serait impertinence à moi*). Eve, § 147, III.

1. 10. *je dois croire.* The indicative does not exclude the reality of the protasis (even though I had and perhaps I really had...), the conditional (*je devrais*) would exclude it (even though I had, but in fact I had not...). Eve, § 284.

1. 17. *en demeurer là* is one of the idioms in which *en* means *in respect of it*. Eve, § 142, IV. (to stop there in respect of it = to go no farther).

1. 19. *le proverbe.* Furetière's dictionary (1690) mentions the proverbial saying to which Molière alludes: 'Cette femme est belle à la chandelle, mais le jour gâte tout, pour dire, que la grande lumière fait aisément découvrir ses défauts'. The fact that many things look better by candle-light than by day-light has given rise to a proverb familiar to many nations which cautions people against judging of women or linen by candle-light and has received a concise and pretty form in Italian: 'Nè donna nè tela A lume di candela'.

1. 20. *du théâtre de Bourbon.* The *Hôtel de Bourbon* or simply *le Petit-Bourbon* had its name from its founder, the duke Louis I. of Bourbon, and belonged to his descendants till 1527, when after the high-treason of Charles II., *connétable de Bourbon*, it was confiscated and became royal property together with the duchy of Bourbon and all the fiefs belonging to the *connétable*. It was situated between the old Louvre and the church Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. In the seventeenth

century its great hall was sometimes used for court festivities and dramatic performances. Since 1658 Molière's troop had been allowed to use the *théâtre de Bourbon* alternately with an Italian troop of actors. In October, 1660, a great part of the *Hôtel de Bourbon* including the theatre was demolished because the ground was required for an enlargement of the Louvre, especially for a new façade opposite Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.

la galerie du Palais. The *Palais*, partly built by the King Saint Louis (reigning 1226—1270) and situated in the *cité* of Paris, was originally inhabited by French Kings. Charles V. (1364—1380) gave it to the *parlement* (court of justice) of Paris, and it was called *Palais de Justice* or simply *Palais*. Accordingly *terme de palais* means 'law term', *style du* (or *de*) *palais* 'law style', *suivre le palais* 'to devote one's self to the profession of a lawyer'. The two sides of the great gallery of the Palais ('la galerie du Palais') were formerly occupied by shops of booksellers (among others that of Guillaume de Luynes, the publisher of *Les Précieuses ridicules*), milliners, glovers, perfumers; and the gallery itself was a favourite gathering-place of fashionable society. Molière means to say that he did not wish his play to be printed and sold by the booksellers of the *galerie du Palais*.

1. 22. *une copie dérobée de ma pièce.* See Introduction, p. xxxiv. The same publisher who was prevented in time from publishing his intended surreptitious edition of *Les Précieuses ridicules*, succeeded in bringing out some months later a surreptitious edition of Molière's *Sganarelle*. Molière heard too late of the trick, and the result of a perquisition made at the author's request in the houses of the printer and of the publisher was, that of 1200 printed copies only four could be confiscated. It is perhaps worth mentioning that two of Shakespeare's plays (*Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*) appeared first in surreptitious editions and that both in Molière's time and in Shakespeare's the loss suffered from such editions by a dramatist who happened to be at the same time a stage-manager was a double one: he lost not only his share of the profit derived from the publication, but also, from the moment his piece had appeared in print, the exclusive right of presentation on his own stage.

1. 23. *accompagnée d'un privilège.* Every printed book or pamphlet had to be accompanied by a privilege and to contain the name and address of the printer. The regulations were very strict with regard to this point and contravention of them was punished with 'perdition de biens et punition corporelle'.

1. 24. *O temps ! ô mœurs !* is an imitation of Cicero's 'O tempora ! o mores !' (I. oration against Catilina, I. 2 and elsewhere), also used by La Fontaine in his fable *Le Cerf malade* (XII. 6):

'O temps ! ô mœurs ! j'ai beau crier,
Tout le monde se fait payer'.

It occurs with a slight variation: 'ô siècle ! ô mœurs !' in Ménage's satirical poem *La Requête des Dictionnaires*.

1. 26. *le dernier mal*. A lawsuit in Molière's time appears indeed to have been a great evil. In *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, II. 8, its inconveniences are very amusingly enumerated by Scapin to the miserly Argante who prefers having a lawsuit to spending 200 pistoles: 'Voyez...combien d'animaux ravissants par les griffes desquels il vous faudra passer: sergents, procureurs, avocats, greffiers, substituts, rapporteurs, juges, et leurs clercs. Il n'y a pas un de tous ces gens-là qui, pour la moindre chose, ne soit capable de donner un soufflet au meilleur droit du monde.... Pour plaider il vous faudra de l'argent. Il vous en faudra pour l'exploit; il vous en faudra pour la procuration, pour la présentation, les conseils, productions, et journées de procureur. Il vous en faudra pour les consultations et plaidoiries des avocats, pour le droit de retirer le sac et pour les grosses d'écritures. Il vous en faudra pour le rapport des substituts, pour les épices de conclusion, pour l'enregistrement du greffier, façon d'appointement, sentences et arrêts, contrôles, signatures et expéditions de leurs clercs, sans parler de tous les présents qu'il vous faudra faire'. The Code-Louis (a collection of laws given by Louis XIV. and published in 1667 and 1670) reformed the legal process to some extent by abolishing several superfluous parts of it. Had not Molière succeeded in getting the publisher Ribou's privilege cancelled, and had he instead of it appealed to the law, he would have had little chance of seeing his property restored to him, the protection of copyright being scarcely provided for in his time.

1. 28. *qu'on ne laisserait pas de faire*. *Laisser* is in this idiom a neuter verb and synonymous with *s'abstenir*, *cesser*, *discontinuer*; being then a verb of separation it takes *de* meaning 'from' (Eve, § 120, I. 1, and § 195, I.). Cf. p. 38, 6. Translate: 'which they would not abstain from doing, which they would be sure to do'.

1. 29. *l'étrange embarras qu'un livre*. In exclamations we are inclined to express only those notions which affect our minds most strongly and to leave unexpressed others which from the strict grammatical point of view seem necessary to form a complete sentence. Thus in

exclaiming *l'étrange embarras* the author simply draws the attention to that notion which moves him most without caring whether his words will form a complete sentence. Cf. p. 8, 1; 8, 14; 7, 18; 39, 9. The exclamation *l'étrange embarras* is followed by the abridged relative sentence *qu'un livre* the complete form of which would be *qu'est un livre*. Cf. p. 8, 14 *La belle chose que ce serait*, where we have the relative sentence in its unabridged form; cf. also p. 8, 1; p. 37, 12; p. 40, 14. Thus the original meaning of the sentence *Est-ce un bien pour l'homme que la liberté?* (Eve, § 69, Obs. 2) is: 'Is that which liberty is a blessing for man?' and of the sentence *C'est mériter la mort que l'attendre d'autrui* (Eve, § 68): 'That which waiting for death from somebody else is (=waiting for death from somebody else) is deserving it'.

PAGE 2.

1. 7. *une épître dédicatoire*. Want of protection or of money has indeed often been the motive of writing dedicatory epistles, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. D'Aubigné (1551—1630) says at the beginning of a pamphlet of his that he does not wish to imitate 'ces ignorants lesquels ayant quelque œuvre douteux à mettre au vent, cherchent *pour la défense de leur écrit*, les uns le roi, qui a tant de choses à défendre, les autres quelque prince.... Enfin la folie des dédications est venue jusqu'au capitaine d'argoulets ('arquebusiers')', and Furetière (1620—1688) in his amusing summary of a pretended book on 'toutes les questions qui se peuvent faire touchant la dédicace des livres' gives as the heading of one chapter: 'Qui fut le premier inventeur des dédicaces. Ensemble quelques conjectures historiques qui prouvent qu'elles ont été *trouvées par un mendiant*'. Molière made a moderate use of dedicatory epistles and their style is generally plain. The *grand Corneille* was less discreet in this respect, and the exaggerated flatteries addressed to the rich banker Montauron (who, it is true, paid for them handsomely) in the dedication of his *Cinna* have become proverbial.

1. 8. *une belle et docte préface*. Molière would in this respect also only have followed a custom of the time. There is no play of Corneille's that was not published with a *préface* or with an *examen* (beside the dedicatory epistle) in which the poet justified or explained his manner of treating the subject of the play and of dealing with the rules of the drama; indeed several of his plays had both a *préface* and an *examen*.

1. 12. *pour la recommandation de ma pièce.* Molière alludes to the custom, common with contemporary authors, of publishing with their works poetical homages received from their friends. So Corneille's comedy *La Veuve* had appeared, 1634, with twenty-six eulogizing poems addressed to him by Scudéry, Mairêt, Rotrou and other authors. In 1655, Furetière said in one of his satires

'...On a maintenant cette sotte coutume
Par des vers mendiés de grossir son volume,
De quêter de l'encens chez des amis flatteurs,
D'avoir diversité de langues et d'auteurs'.

Some people seem to have made a regular trade of writing poetical eulogies. So the unfortunate poet Le Petit (burnt about 1665 for his licentious poems) 'ne vivait que de livrets et d'éloges d'auteurs, à la douzaine, propres à être mis en forme de sonnet ou d'épigramme et madrigal, à la tête de leurs ouvrages tant bons que mauvais', as Jean Rou, a friend of his, relates.

1. 15. *en grec.* Molière repeatedly ridicules those people who are imposed upon by a language which they do not understand and also those who wish to impose upon others by the use of learned speech, e.g. the 'femmes savantes' with their respect for Greek ('Du grec, ô ciel! du grec! Il sait du grec, ma sœur!') *Les Femmes savantes*, III. 5) and the physicians with their pedantic technicalities (*L'Amour médecin*, II. 5, *Le Médecin malgré lui*, II. 6, and *Le Malade imaginaire*, II. 9).

1. 16. *efficace* is at present obsolete and *efficacité* is used instead of it. In the seventeenth century *efficace* was however the more usual word. The Jesuit father Bouhours says, 1674, in his *Remarques nouvelles sur la langue française* about the word *efficacité*: 'Il y a des prédicateurs et des écrivains qui usent de ce mot; il n'est point français; il faut dire *efficace*'.

1. 19. *sur le sujet.* We should now say *au sujet* (with regard to). In the seventeenth century *sur le sujet* seems to have been the more usual expression. Thus Molière in *L'École des Femmes*, II. 4, *J'ai suivi sa leçon sur le sujet d'Agnès*.

1. 27. *du Docteur.* The *Doctor* was originally one of the types of the Italian extempore comedy (*commedia dell' arte*); his character was that of a learned pedant, and his garment that of a member of the University of Bologna. Through the companies of Italian actors who from the time of François I. again and again visited France and

especially Paris, that type among others had become familiar to the French, and found its way into French comedy. In Molière's early farce, *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, it occurs still in its original shape, in his later plays in various refined forms (examples: the learned pedants Métaphraste, Marphurius, Pancrace, Caritidès, and the pedantic physicians Tomès, Macroton, Diafoirus).

du Capitan. The *Braggart Captain* was another type of the *commedia dell' arte*; he is nothing but a modernized form of Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*. From Italian plays French comedy-writers borrowed the type under various names (Rodomont, Matamore, Artabaze, Taillebras, Fierabras, Briarée and others); Molière used it only once (Argatiphontidas in his *Amphitryon*).

1. 28. *Trivelin* was also a type borrowed from the *commedia dell' arte*, a variety of the *zanni*, brought to France, as it seems, by the Italian actor Domenico Locatelli, 1645. The type of the *zanni* with its numerous shades and special names (partly of popular origin as *Arlecchino*, *Pulcinella*, partly created by actors as *Francatrippa*, *Scaramuccia*, *Trivellino*) was the modernized form of the *maccus* of the old Roman farce. Originally merely a clown the *zanni* became in the course of time a sly, cynical or stupid valet. Imitations or transformations of the *zanni* in Molière's works are: Sganarelle, Gros-René, Mascarille, Jodelet, Scapin and others.

1. 33. *M. de Luynes* was the publisher of *Les Précieuses ridicules*.

m'aller relier. When verbs are immediately followed by an infinitive, the pronouns governed by that infinitive are *generally* put before the infinitive after the auxiliaries of mood, they *may* stand before the infinitive in the case of verbs of motion and they *must* stand before forms of *faire*, *laisser*, *entendre*, *voir*, followed by an infinitive. Eve, § 49. In Old French in all the above mentioned cases the pronoun preceded the verb which was followed by the infinitive. The use of the seventeenth century agrees in this respect generally with the Old French usage, though many examples of the modern use are already to be found. *M'aller relier* = *aller me relier* is at present still correct, and so are *me vient conter*, p. 8, 17, *me viendra développer*, p. 12, 8, *m'est venu voir*, p. 35, 17, *vous vais contenter*, p. 41, 19, also *m'en est venu prier*, p. 25, 9. The following cases are however against the strict modern rule (which, it is true, admits of some exceptions): *se pût accommoder*, p. 7, 18, *se doit faire*, p. 9, 6, *il n'en faut point douter*, p. 11, 20, *vous veux venir voir*, p. 12, 15, *nous peut voir*, p. 13, 4, *s'osent jouer*, p. 14, 16, *en pourrions-*

nous dire, p. 18, 1, *se peuvent payer*, p. 22, 7, *m'a voulu mener*, p. 35, 17, *les voulez aimer*, p. 39, 6, *vous veux payer*, p. 41, 20, *en prétendez-vous faire*, p. 5, 23, *j'en prétends faire*, p. 5, 24, *il n'en doit bien souvenir*, p. 32, 13.

PAGE 3.

LES PERSONNAGES.

La Grange, *Du Croisy*, *Jodelet* and perhaps also *Marotte* are not only the names of the *dramatis personae* but also of the actors who first took the parts. The first three names were stage-names (like *Molière*). *Charles Varlet*, called *La Grange*, had belonged to *Molière's* company since 1659. *Chappuzeau* in his interesting if not always reliable book *Le Théâtre français* (1674) is right in what he says with regard to *La Grange*: 'Il passe avec justice pour très-bon acteur, soit pour le sérieux, soit pour le comique, et il n'y a point de rôle qu'il n'exécute très-bien'. In 1664 he succeeded *Molière* in his function as orator of the company, i.e. the actor who at the end of each representation thanked the public for their attention, advertised and praised the next play, and invited the audience to come and see it. He was besides for a long time secretary and bursar of the company. The 'extrait des recettes et des affaires de la Comédie depuis Pâques de l'année 1659', an account-book and chronicle which he kept for his own use, are the richest source for the history of the company during *Molière's* life-time. Nine years after *Molière's* death he published in conjunction with *Vinot* the first complete edition of his works, with a preface which contains the only reliable contemporary biography of the poet.

Philibert Gassaud, called *Du Croisy*, who entered *Molière's* company at the same time with *La Grange*, was also an esteemed actor; he is said to have been excellent in the part of *Tartuffe*, which he played for more than twenty years.

Julien Bedeau, called *Jodelet*, a successful actor of low comic parts, also joined *Molière's* company in 1659, but died a year later.

Marotte (a diminutive form of *Marie* which is said to be still used in *Franche-Comté*) was perhaps acted by *Marie Ragueneau*, familiarly called *Marotte*, who later on married *La Grange*.

It was not unusual for *dramatis personae* to bear the names of the actors who were to represent them. There exists a whole series of *Jodelet*-plays (the first of them was *Scarron's Jodelet ou Le Maître*

valet, 1645) in which the part of Jodelet was written for and called after the above mentioned actor Jodelet.

The name *Gorgibus* (which grotesquely combines a trivial root—cf. *se gorger* 'to gorge'—with a learned termination) was not invented by Molière, but taken from life. The Cardinal de Retz in his *Mémoires* mentions it among other 'noms saugrenus' occurring in an inquiry of the Palais at which he assisted ten years before *Les Précieuses ridicules* was brought on the stage. We meet with *Gorgibus* in several other plays of Molière; it is always the name of an elderly, dry, but honest *bourgeois*.

Madelon is a diminutive form of *Madeleine*, as *Cathos* (occurring in various spellings: *Catos*, *Cathau*, *Catau*, *Cataut*, *Cateau*) is of *Catherine*.

Almanzor is an Arabic name ('the victorious one', borne e.g. by a famous caliph, the founder of Bagdad) which the two *Précieuses*, fond as they are of poetical names, may have taken from Gomberville's (1600—1674) novel *Polexandre* (1637) narrating among many other things the sad story of Almanzor, prince of Sénéga; or from Quinault's (1635—1688) pastoral play *La généreuse Ingratitude* (1654), the scene of which is the forest of Algiers, and in which one of the Moorish lovers is called Almanzor.

Mascarille (from Spanish *mascarilla* 'mask covering the upper half of the face') was a cynical type of valet imitated by Molière from varieties of the Italian *zanni* (*Scappino* and *Zucca*). As the *zanni* were often acted with masks, so perhaps Molière played *Mascarille* in his two comedies *L'Étourdi* and *Le Dépit amoureux* with a mask, and accordingly chose the name. It is probable however that he did not keep the mask for *Mascarille* in *Les Précieuses ridicules* (see the representation of *Mascarille* on the title-page of the edition of Molière's works published 1666, and in the edition of 1682, facsimiles of which are given in Lacroix' *xvii^e Siècle, Institutions, Usages et Costumes*, p. 517, and *Lettres, Sciences et Arts*, p. 193), especially as the character of *Mascarille* has been to some extent altered and refined.

After the list of the *dramatis personae* the edition of 1734 adds: 'La scène est à Paris, dans la maison de Gorgibus'.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that an old 'mémoire de plusieurs décorations...' which gives information on the theatre-properties used for Molière's plays since 1680 says '*Les Précieuses*.—Il faut une chaise de porteurs, deux fauteuils, deux battes' ('beaters', in Scene XIII.).

PAGE 4.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE.

1. 1. *Seigneur la Grange*. The title 'seigneur' instead of 'monsieur' was due to noblemen, prelates, officers of the court and members of the *parlement*. It was not however easy always to know at first sight how a stranger was to be addressed, as many sons of *bourgeois* were rather extravagant in their dress. A satirical pamphlet of 1625 contains with regard to this the following complaint: 'Aujourd'hui l'on ne connaît plus rien aux habits; tout est permis, pourvu que l'argent marche: quand on parlê à quelqu'un, on ne sait si l'on doit dire *monseigneur* ou *monsieur* simplement'. La Grange and Du Croisy are apparently not meant to be *bourgeois*.

1. 7. *A votre avis*. An adverbial expression placed, as here and p. 17, 2, at the beginning of an interrogative sentence, has a special emphasis. The exceptional position (which is found occasionally in modern French) is most common in poetry, e.g. in Racine's *Les Plaideurs* l. 788 'Pour nous justifier, voulez-vous d'autres pièces?', ib. ll. 51, 291, 348. Cf. also the example from *L'Avare* in the note to l. 16.

1. 10. *deux pecques provinciales...que celles-là* 'a couple of silly country wenches giving themselves such airs as these'. *Pecque*, still used in familiar speech, is the feminine of the masculine noun *pec* which is now out of use. The words *pec*, *pecque* come from the southern provinces of France where they have been in use since the early middle ages. They are derived from Latin *pecus* 'sheep' which was applied to persons in abusive speech (the feminine *pecus*, *ŭdis* in 'stupor hominis vel dicam *pecudis*' Cicero, and the neuter *pecus*, *oris* in a collective sense in 'imitatorum servum *pecus*' Horace). The word *la pécure* 'stupid person' is also confined to familiar speech, and is borrowed from Italian, where the feminine noun *pecora* 'sheep, block-head' is the regular continuation of the Latin plural *pecora* of the neuter *pecus*.

1. 11. *renchéries* is the past participle of *rencherir* 'to make dearer, to grow dearer,' and accordingly means 'raised or risen in price', then metaphorically used of persons 'particular, nice': therefore *faire le renchéri* 'to act the particular one, to be particular'. *Rencherir sur qlqn., qlqch.* (p. 19, 23) is 'to go beyond, to improve upon'.

1. 16. *que oui et non.* The modern usage would require the addition of *autre chose* before *que*. Cf. in Molière's *L'Avare*, IV. 1 'Et dans la dépendance où je me vois, puis-je former *que* des souhaits?' It is only after an expressed or implied negative that *que* is used in modern French with the meaning 'except'. Eve, § 288. Thus 'Que lui ai-je dit *que* d'indifférent?' or 'Vous voyez des gens qui entrent sans saluer *que* légèrement'.

PAGE 5.

1. 1. *nous avons pu leur dire.* It should be noticed that *nous avons pu dire* can mean (1) 'we have been able to say' (thus p. 1, 6 *d'avoir pu applaudir* 'to have been able to applaud'), (2) 'we may (possibly) have said' (thus here). Cf. p. 19, 22.

1. 7. *L'air précieux*, translate simply 'affectation'.

1. 8. *nos donzelles...bonne part* 'our ridiculous damsels have sucked in their fair share of it'. *Donzelle* and *demoiselle* are 'doublets' i.e. they are two different developments of the same original word. *Dominicellam*, a diminutive of Latin *dominam*, becomes in French *demoiselle*, in Italian and Southern French (Provençal) *donzella*, which, imported to the North, there becomes *donzelle*.

1. 10. *c'est un ambigu de précieuse et de coquette* 'they are a medley of affectation and coquetry'. In Regnard's (1655—1709) comedy *Le Joueur* (1696) the valet Hector advises his penniless master, the gambler Valère, to make love to a rich coquettish widow. His description of her, 'C'est...Un ambigu nouveau de prude et de coquette' is apparently a reminiscence of our passage.

1. 12. *nous leur jouerons...une pièce* 'we will play them a trick'. *Pièce* in the sense of 'trick' occurs in several familiar French idioms as 'jouer une *pièce* à qlqn.', 'faire (une) *pièce* à qlqn.', 'la *pièce* est bonne, plaisante'. Cf. p. 40, 18.

11. 23 and 24. *qu'en prétendez-vous faire? Ce que j'en prétends faire?* On the use of *ce que* to repeat a question before answering it, when the question itself excites some surprise, cf. Eve, § 101. On the place of *en* cf. note to p. 2, 33.

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SCÈNE II.

1. 6. According to the stage-tradition (represented by La Grange's edition of 1682) Du Croisy repeats the last words of La Grange: *vos très-humbles serviteurs*.

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SCÈNE III.

1. 2. *C'est trop pommadé* 'there is no end of their pomatum'. After the verb *être* and in reference to the subject *ce* the past participle of a verb can be used as a predicate in the sense of an infinitive of the perfect, if it is accompanied by an adverb such as *assez*, *trop*, *bien*. Cf. p. 34, 1 and Boileau *Sat.* VII. 'Mais c'est assez *parlé*; prenons un peu d'haleine'.

After *descendent* we have to suppose, as the edition of 1734 and subsequent editions indicate, that Marotte goes out and Gorgibus continues to speak to himself.

1. 3. *avec leur pommade*. Pomatum had to contribute in various ways to the cultivation of beauty. According to Furetière '[la pommade] sert à plusieurs usages...à guérir...des élevures (blotches), des gerçures (chaps), à rendre le teint frais, net et poli, à adoucir les mains, à mettre sur les cheveux pour les poudrer et friser etc.'

1. 4. *lait virginal* 'une certaine liqueur pour blanchir les mains et le visage' (Furetière), 'nun's cream'. Different receipts have been given, the following one by Cotgrave in his French-English Dictionary 1611 (and similarly by Furetière): 'A milk compounded of the froth or spume of gold steeped in vinegar, and salt infused in waters of plantain, nightshade and roses'.

1. 6. *Elles ont usé...le lard* 'they have used (up) the fat'. On the difference of meaning between 'user *qlqch.*' and 'user *de qlqch.*' cf. Eve, Appendix II.

le lard d'une douzaine de cochons. The two *Précieuses* could use it for cosmetic purposes in various manners: as an ingredient of pomade or of 'eau de lard' for which according to a book on cosmetics of the time, 'il faut prendre deux livres de la gorge d'un porc mâle qui soit bien gras' or they could imitate the custom of laying slices of bacon on their faces during the night in order to keep their complexion fresh.

1. 7. *pour le moins* means the same as *au moins*, the preposition *pour* seems to have in this expression the same force as in *pour moi* = 'quant à moi', Eve, § 165.

1. 8. *des pieds de mouton*. The same book which gives the receipt for 'eau de lard' (cf. note to l. 6) prescribes for 'pommade de pieds de mouton': 'vous prendrez cinq ou six douzaines de pieds de mouton, deux ou trois jours devant la pleine lune'. The whole passage from l. 6 to l. 11 seems more or less to be a reminiscence of a passage in Scarron's (1610—1660) *L'Héritier ridicule* (1649, acted on Molière's stage and a favourite play of Louis XIV., the plot of which offers some analogy with Molière's *Les Précieuses ridicules*). In Act v. Scene I. of that play Filipin, a valet whose part corresponds to that of Mascarille in our play, declares his love to Paquette the servant of a lady whose part would correspond to Madelon's. Paquette seems to find Filipin's love quite natural and says:

'parmi des demoiselles,

Telle que je puis être, on en voit d'aussi belles
Que ces dames de prix, en qui souvent, dit-on,
Blanc, perles, coques d'œuf, lard et pieds de mouton,
Baume, lait virginal et cent mille autres drogues,
Des têtes sans cheveux.....
Font des miroirs d'amour'.

Molière comes back to the abuse of cosmetics in his *L'École des Femmes* (III. 2) where of the 'maximes du mariage' recommended by Arnolphe to Agnès, the third one proscribes

'Ces eaux, ces blancs, ces pommades,
Et mille ingrédients qui font des teints fleuris'.

SCÈNE IV.

1. 12. *que je les vois sortir*. *Que* means here 'so that'. Cf. Eve, § 255, Obs. 2. Thus often after questions, e.g. '*Qu'avez-vous donc, dit-il, que vous ne mangez point?*' Boileau, *Sat.* III.

1. 13. *Vous avais-je pas commandé...?* The original difference of meaning between *savez-vous point* (or *pas*, 'do you know at all?') and *ne savez-vous point* (or *pas*, 'do you not know?') was no longer observed in the seventeenth century. At present the form without *ne*

which in the seventeenth century was considered by Vaugelas (1647) and 'diverses personnes très-savantes en notre langue' as more elegant than the form with *ne*, is limited to popular and familiar speech. Cf. p. 30, 18 'Voyez-vous *pas*?'

1. 17. *du procédé irrégulier*. See Appendix, p. 93.

1. 18. *Le moyen...se pût accommoder*. *Le moyen* is a grammatically incomplete sentence like the exclamation 'l'étrange embarras' p. 1, 29 and means as much as 'Dites-moi *le moyen*'. Cf. p. 13, 1. The word *que* following *le moyen* may be understood either as the final conjunction ('in order that') or as a relative adverb ('by which, how'; cf. 'en l'état *que* je suis', 'de la manière *que* j'ai parlé'). In both cases the sentence with *que* denotes a purpose or an intended consequence, the mood of its verb must therefore be the subjunctive. Cf. Eve, § 260 and § 253. Instead of *pût* we should rather expect *puisse* (Eve, § 286), but the usage of the seventeenth century as to the sequence of tenses was much freer than the modern one (cf. p. 14, 2; p. 16, 9; p. 19, 27), and in particular after the present, the first future, and the imperative of a principal sentence, we frequently meet with the imperfect subjunctive in the subordinate sentence with *que*. Thus *Le Tartuffe*, I. 2: 'Je n'y veux point aller, De peur qu'elle ne *vînt* encore me quereller'. On the place of the pronoun *se* in *se pût accommoder* cf. note to p. 2, 33.

PAGE 8.

1. 1. *La belle galanterie que la leur*. Cf. note to p. 1, 29.

débuter d'abord par le mariage. See Introduction, p. xxvii. On the derivation of *débuter* cf. note to p. 9, 19.

1. 3. *par où*. Instead of *par* with the neuter of the interrogative pronoun *par où* can be used, e.g. '*Par où* réussira-t-il?' (Acad.). Cf. note to l. 12.

1. 5. *Est-il rien* 'is there anything'. In modern French the impersonal verb *il est* meaning 'there is, there are' is confined to elevated style. Vaugelas considered '*il n'est point d'homme si stupide qui ne reconnaisse une Divinité*' to be better than '*il n'y a point d'h.*' etc., but '*il y a des herbes si venimeuses, qu'elles font mourir subitement*' (in the affirmative) to be better than '*il est des herbes*' etc.

1. 6. *du dernier bourgeois*. See Appendix, p. 93 (under *Choses*). *Le bourgeois* is an abstract noun, and means 'that which is citizen-like'; examples of adjectives with the definite article used as abstract

nouns are frequent in this play, cf. p. 8, 21 *le doux, le tendre et le passionné*; p. 9, 27 *le vrai*; p. 16, 17 *le doux*; p. 19, 23 *le ridicule*; p. 20, 23 *le beau*; p. 21, 17 *le galant*; p. 24, 11 *le fin*; with the possessive pronoun p. 16, 17 *notre sérieux*. This substantival use of adjectives seems to have become fashionable about Molière's time; it exists still, though to a smaller extent.

1. 7. *Cela me fait honte de vous ouïr*. Impersonal verbs followed by an infinitive with *de* (Eve, § 198) are occasionally preceded by *cela, ce* (pointing to the following 'logical subject') instead of *il*. Thus in Molière's *Le Médecin volant*, 2: '*cela* est bien difficile de faire le médecin' and in De Vigny (1799—1863): '*Cela* faisait peine de la voir se déchirer le sein'. In popular speech the shortened form *çà* is still usual in this case, e.g. '*Çà* s'rait si beau pourtant d'aller chercher ses étrennes' (H. Monnier, *Scènes populaires*). It will be remembered that, as a rule, *cela* refers only to something that precedes, Eve, § 77, 11. *Ouïr* is a defective verb and hardly ever used except in the infinitive and past participle.

de la sorte. On the demonstrative force of *la* in this phrase cf. Eve, § 15, (7).

1. 8. *le bel air des choses*. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 10. *ni d'air ni de chanson*. Gorgibus' pun turns not only on *air* (meaning (a) 'appearance, deportment', (b) 'tune'), but also on *chanson* (meaning (a) 'song', (b) 'stuff, trash' e.g. *Le Dépôt amoureux*, III. 8: '...je me sens piqué de ce discours étrange,...Car Lucile soutient que c'est une *chanson*' and Racine's *Les Plaideurs*, II. 2).

1. 11. *sainte et sacrée*. The difference between the two synonyms *saint* and *sacré* is that the former means 'holy in itself' and the latter (opposed to 'profane') 'sacred, made holy by religious ceremonies'. Thus 'la *sainte* Trinité', 'la *sainte* Vierge', 'la *sainte* Écriture', but 'ce lien *sacré*', 'le *sacré* collège', 'la personne *sacrée* du roi'.

faire en honnêtes gens. We should now say 'agir en h. g.' Thus *Les Fâcheux*, I. 6 'Il sait faire obéir les plus grands de l'État, Et je trouve qu'il *fait* en digne potentat'. In other cases *faire* in the sense of 'agir' is still quite usual, e.g. '*faire bien*', '*faire mal*', 'il a *fait* en cela comme vous auriez *fait*'.

1. 12. *par là*. On the use of the adverb *là* with the prepositions *par, dessus, dessous* in the sense of a neuter pronoun cf. Eve, § 55.

1. 13. *que...un roman serait bientôt fini!* 'how soon a love-story would be over'. Adverbs such as *combien, que, à quel point, tant* are

placed so as to qualify the sentence while the English adverbs *how*, so generally qualify single words. Cf. Eve § 302. The order of words after such adverbs is the same as that of simple statements. We say '*Combien le jour est pur ! que le ciel est serein !*' (Lebrun) just as we say '*le jour est pur, le ciel est serein*'. Cf. p. 30, 2.

1. 14. *La belle chose que ce serait.* Cf. note to p. 1, 29.

1. 15. *Cyrus épousait Mandane, et qu'Aronce...Clélie!* See Introduction, p. xxvii. *De plain-pied* means first 'on one flat' (thus '*des chambres de plain-pied*'), 'without going up or down' (thus '*de la salle on entre de plain-pied dans le jardin*'), and then metaphorically (as here) 'without meeting obstacles', 'directly' ('*Combien de favoris de la fortune vont de plain-pied saisir les premiers postes !*' Massillon). Cf. *de front* etc. Eve, § 137.

et qu'Aronce...fût marié 'and if Aronce were married'. *Que* with the subjunctive is used to avoid the repetition of *si*. Cf. Eve, § 277, 1.

1. 17. *Que me vient conter celle-ci?* 'What is the girl jabbering about?' *Conter* in the sense of 'talking nonsense' as in some other idioms: '*en conter* (de belles, rudes, fortes)', '*conter des sornettes*' ('to tell fibs').

1. 21. *pousser*. In modern French it is still possible to say '*pousser un cri, un gémissement, un soupir*', where *pousser* means 'to utter', but its use is now limited to the expression of violent and generally painful feelings. In the seventeenth century it served to designate any lively utterance, and occurs with other nouns. Thus in Molière's *Amphitryon*, I. 4 '*Il nous ferait beau voir, attachés face à face A pousser les beaux sentiments*' and elsewhere we meet with '*pousser des tendresses, des vœux, une prière, une menterie*'.

le doux, le tendre et le passionné is equivalent to '*des sentiments doux, tendres et passionnés*', cf. note to p. 8, 6.

1. 22. *dans les formes*, 'according to the rules'; '*dans*' with the meaning 'according to' occurs again p. 9, 17 '*dans les belles manières*'. An instance of *dans les formes* which has become famous is that of Molière's *L'Amour médecin*, II. 6, where the physician Macroton explains to Sganarelle what means should be tried to restore his daughter's health, and continues in his dignified manner: '*Ce. n'est. pas. qu'a-vec. tout. ce-la. vo-tre. fil-le. ne. puis-se. mou-rir. mais. au. moins. vous au-rez....la con-so-la-tion. qu'el-le. se-ra. mor-te. dans. les for-mes*'.

1. 23. *au temple*. See Introduction, p. xxvii. In comedies and novels it would have been a profanation to use the word *église* in connexion with love-affairs. The word *temple* was employed instead. Thus in *L'Étourdi*, II. 8, a lady says to her lover, to whom she has news to tell, 'Donnez-moi donc la main Jusqu'au *temple*; en marchant je pourrai vous l'apprendre'.

PAGE 9.

1. 5. *une question galante*. See Introduction, p. xxvii.

qui exerce les esprits. The sense of the relative clause is different according as we take *exerce* as the present indicative or as the present subjunctive. In the former case the sentence would mean 'which exercises the wits'. But it seems more natural to take *exerce* as the present subjunctive and to translate 'to exercise the wits'. Cf. Eve, § 253.

1. 6. *se doit faire*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 9. *qui paraît à notre rougeur* 'which shows itself by our blushing'. *Paraître* takes a dative of the instrument to denote the sign by which something appears, in the same way as verbs of recognizing, judging do, to denote the sign by which we recognize, judge. Cf. Eve, § 150.

1. 10. *pour un temps*. In modern French 'pour *quelque* temps' ('for some while to come') would be required, while l. 3 instead of '*un* temps' '*pour un temps*' or ' (*pendant*) *quelque* temps' would be used. Other examples from Molière of '*un temps*' instead of modern '*quelque* temps' are *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, III. 10 'je souffrirai *un temps*; mais j'en viendrai à bout' and *Le Dépit amoureux*, I. 1 'Valère enfin, pour être un amant rebuté, Montre *depuis un temps* trop de tranquillité'.

1. 16. *les désespoirs*. Many abstract nouns can form a plural in French; the plural of a noun expressing a state of mind means then the repeated occurrence of that state of mind. Thus l. 15 *les jalousies*. Several such plurals are however only used in the *style soutenu*, among them *les désespoirs*, though Littré thinks: 'Désespoir a été employé au pluriel par Corneille, par Mairêt, par Mme de Maintenon, par Mme de La Fayette, par Ducis, par Lamartine. Rien n'empêche de les imiter'.

1. 17. *dans les belles manières*. Cf. note to p. 8, 22.

1. 19. *de but en blanc* 'point-blank'. The literal meaning is 'from mark to mark', which seems to mean 'from the starting-point (of the bullet; cf. the derivative 'dé-but-er' which means literally 'to leave the starting-point', therefore 'to set out, to make one's first appear-

ance') to the point of destination'; *le blanc* means 'the bull's-eye' (e.g. 'tirer au blanc'). In a similar manner Molière uses the idiom again in *Le Malade imaginaire*, II. 1: Cléante comes to see Angélique in order to 'consulter les sentiments de son cœur'. He receives however from the servant Toinette the answer: 'Oui, mais on ne parle pas comme cela *de but en blanc* à Angélique'.

1. 22. *plus marchand que ce procédé* 'more tradesmanlike than such proceedings'. Similarly above (p. 8, 6) 'ce que vous dites là est *du dernier bourgeois*'. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 23. *la seule vision*. The adjective *seul* preceding the noun either is synonymous with *unique* and means 'only', or it means (as here) 'mere', 'nothing but'. For 'vision' see Appendix, p. 95.

1. 25. *Voici bien du haut style*. 'Bien' should be translated by 'indeed' (although it is grammatically possible to construe *bien du haut style* 'beaucoup de haut style'). *Du haut style* is one of the apparent exceptions to the rule that instead of the partitive article *de* should be used with a noun which is preceded by an adjective (Eve, § 23 a), the fact being that *haut style* virtually forms a single word.

1. 27. *donne dans le vrai de la chose* 'goes into the truth of the thing', 'hits the nail on the head'. The neuter verb *donner* is here used in the same way as in 'le soleil *donne dans* ma chambre', 'ce vin *donne dans* la tête'. See Appendix, p. 93. Cf. also p. 16, 17, and p. 27, 17. For 'le vrai' cf. note to p. 8, 6.

1. 28. *Le moyen*. Cf. note to p. 7, 18.

1. 29. *incongrus en galanterie*. See Appendix, p. 94.

Je m'en vais gager. Instead of 'je vais faire quelque chose' ('I am going to do something') we frequently meet in the seventeenth century with 'je m'en vais faire quelque chose'. Thus p. 17, 9 'je m'en vais gagner au pied', and p. 28, 11 'je m'en vais crier', *L'École des Femmes*, V. 1 'Le jour s'en va paraître' and elsewhere.

1. 30. *la carte de Tendre...Billets-Doux*. See Introduction, p. xxvii.

PAGE 10.

1. 1. *Petits-Soins, Billets-Galants et Jolis-Vers*. See Introduction, p. xxviii.

1. 3. *donne d'abord bonne opinion*. See Appendix, p. 95. Eve, § 22, gives a short list, and Appendix iv. (p. 302) a fuller one, of expressions in which the verb *avoir* and other verbs, followed by a noun, express what might be equally well rendered by a single verb, and in

which the noun is left without any article. To these lists may be added from our play: *donner bonne opinion* (but '*donner une bonne opinion*' is also correct); p. 17, 10 *vouloir caution bourgeoise*; p. 19, 6 *donner bruit de connaissance*; p. 27, 1 *avoir bon air*; p. 36, 5 *avoir fantaisie*.

1. 5. *une jambe toute unie*. See Appendix, p. 93. Modern grammar would require '*tout unie*'; cf. Eve, § 40. In Molière's time not only before feminine adjectives beginning with a consonant or an aspirated *h*, but also before feminine adjectives beginning with a vowel or a mute *h*, the feminine forms of the adjective *tout* were used instead of the invariable adverb *tout*. Before masculine adjectives in the plural the usage of the seventeenth century hesitated between the adverb *tout* and the plural adjective *tous*. Thus we find in Racine, *Esther*, II. 1 '*Votre âme, en m'écoutant, paraît toute interdite*' and Molière, *Le Misanthrope*, IV. 3 '*Mais, pour le mettre à bout, j'ai des moyens tous prêts*'. About the end of the seventeenth century the grammarian De la Touche (*L'art de bien parler français*, 1696) is struck by the fact that some writers use the invariable adverb *tout* before feminine adjectives beginning with a vowel.

un chapeau désarmé de plumes. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 6. *une tête irrégulière en cheveux*. See Appendix, p. 94.

un habit...rubans. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 8. *quelle sécheresse de conversation*. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 9. *On n'y dure point*, synonymous with *on n'y tient pas* '*one cannot stand it*', occurs not rarely in the seventeenth century. Thus in Molière's *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*, I '*pensez-vous...que je puisse durer à ses turlupinades ('conundrums') perpétuelles?*' It occurs still in familiar speech.

1. 10. *leurs rabats* 'their neck-bands'. Bands more or less large followed in the seventeenth century the '*fraises*' (ruffs) of the sixteenth century, which had themselves developed out of the small frills and plaited collars of the late middle ages.

de la bonne faiseuse is synonymous with *de la bonne ouvrière* p. 28, 4, and means 'made by a first-rate hand'. The force of the preposition '*de*' is here the same as in '*Voyez si mes regards sont d'un sage sévère*' (Eve, § 124, Obs. 1); instead of the definite article the indefinite article would be now used ('*cela est d'un bon faiseur, d'une bonne faiseuse*' in familiar French). The definite article here points to that single milliner who, compared with others, deserves to be called 'the good one' or 'the right one', and should be patronized by fashionable

people. Cf. p. 15, 9. Similarly we find in a comedy of 1664 'Que ce corps ('bodice') est bien pris! Je gage mille écus Qu'il est *du bon tailleur*'.

1. 11. *il s'en faut plus d'un grand demi-pied*. Cf. Eve, § 134, Obs. 1 and § 142, IV. Of the two constructions '*beaucoup s'en faut*' (also '*il s'en faut beaucoup*', where *beaucoup* is the logical subject anticipated by the grammatical subject *il*) and '*il s'en faut de beaucoup*' the latter is of later origin and evidently an imitation of the use of *de* to answer the question 'by how much' after comparatives, and words or phrases implying comparison.

1. 12. *leurs hauts-de-chausses*. In the middle ages two different pieces of clothing served to cover legs and feet: the *braie* ('breeches') and the *hose*; in the fifteenth century a single piece was made out of the two, *les chausses*, which was since Charles VIII. (1483—1498) again divided into two parts: the upper part called *haut de chausses* and the lower part called *bas de chausses* or simply *bas*. The width and length of the *hauts-de-chausses* ('breeches') was subject to a series of changing fashions. At the time of *Les Précieuses ridicules* the fashion was to have them wide. Two years later (1661) Sganarelle in *L'École des Maris* (I. 1) still speaks of 'ces cotillons appelés *hauts-de-chausses*', and 1665 the peasant Pierrot in *Don Juan* (II. 1) speaking of noblemen: 'En glicu (= lieu) d'*haut-de-chausse*, ils portent (=portent) un garde-robe ('apron') aussi large que d'ici à Pasque (=Pâques).

ne soient assez larges. After '*il s'en faut*', used negatively or with 'peu', *que ne* is now used (Eve, § 295), but after '*il s'en faut*', used positively, *que* alone. In the seventeenth century however the use of the positive '*il s'en faut*' with *que ne* is quite frequent. The negative is in the latter case a pleonasm, for a negative lies already implied in '*faut*'.

1. 16. *et nous appelez*. If two affirmative imperatives are connected by *et* or *ou*, Molière generally places the personal pronouns governed by the second of them before it, though examples of the modern usage also occur in his works, e.g. *L'École des Femmes*, v. 3 'Entrez dans cette porte et *laissez-vous* conduire'. Cf. Eve, § 48^a, Obs.

1. 20. *si spirituelle que moi*. The modern rule that *aussi* may be used before adjectives and adverbs followed by *que* in positive and negative sentences, but *si* only in negative sentences, was by no means generally observed in the seventeenth century and later still. Thus Hamilton (1720) 'On y fait *si* bonne chère qu'on veut'.

1. 22. *ce serait assez d'un de ces noms* 'one of these names would be sufficient'. On the genitive after *il suffit*, *c'est assez* cf. Eve, § 135, Obs. The preposition *de* seems in these idioms to suggest the idea of drawing from a source, as after verbs and adjectives denoting fulness. Cf. Eve, § 122.

1. 26. *pâtir*. The neuter verb *pâtir* is synonymous with *souffrir*. While the latter however suggests the idea of a sensitive being that *feels pain*, the former only awakes the idea of a (sensitive or inanimate) being the *vigour* of which is *weakening*. So Voltaire says 'Un fou est un malade dont le cerveau *pâtit*, comme le gouteux est un malade qui *souffre* aux pieds et aux mains'.

furieusement. See Appendix, p. 96.

PAGE II.

1. 1. *le nom de Polyxène...que je me suis donné*. See Introduction, p. xxiv.

1. 2. *dont...vous demeuriez d'accord* 'which you must needs acknowledge'. The idioms 'être d'accord', 'demeurer d'accord' and 'tomber d'accord' ('to agree') take a genitive in answer to the question 'in respect of what'. Cf. Eve, § 135. Thus Corneille, *Le Cid*, IV. 2 'Le roi même *est d'accord de cette vérité*' and Mme de Sévigné 'Il *demeure d'accord de tout*'.

1. 4. *il n'y a qu'un mot qui serve* is idiomatic: 'There is only one thing to be said about it'. *Servir* is sometimes used absolutely with the meaning 'to be of use', e.g. Boileau, *Satire* III. 'Ma foi, le jugement *sert* bien dans la lecture'.

je n'entends point que vous ayez 'I will not have you take'. The subjunctive is used with *que* after *entendre*, *prétendre*, if they mean 'to wish', but they take the indicative if *entendre* means 'to understand' and *prétendre* 'to maintain'. Cf. Eve, §§ 247 and 239.

1. 6. *marraines*. The edition of 1682 has *vos marraines*; *vos parrains et marraines* is however not incorrect and is a parallel to *mes frères et sœurs* (Eve, § 64).

1. 13. *je trouve le mariage une chose tout à fait choquante*. See Introduction, p. xxiv. *Treuve* was archaic even in Molière's time. According to Vaugelas (1647) good prose-writers did not use it, and the court said *trouve*. 'Nos poètes néanmoins se servent de l'un et de l'autre à la fin des vers pour la commodité de la rime; car ils font rimer *treuve* avec *neuve*, comme *trouve* avec *louve*'. A writer on

spelling and pronunciation, Lartigaut is, 1669, of another opinion: 'il est bien plus doux de prononcer *j'épreuve, trouver*...C'est aussi ce que font tous ceux qui se piquent de bien parler'. Cathos is not consistent in her pronunciation: p. 19, l. 23, she says *je trouve*; Jodelet pronounces *je treuve*, p. 35, 4. The edition of 1682 has both here and p. 35, 4 *trouve*.

1. 18. *Il n'en faut point douter*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

achevées. *Achevé* means 'finished, perfect', e.g. '*une beauté achevée*', 'un fou *achevé*' ('a perfect madman'); then '*achevé* *alone*' (with 'in one's kind as a fool' understood) 'completely mad'. Thus here and in Molière's *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* 'Le petit voyage qu'elle a fait à Paris l'a ramenée dans l'Angoulême plus *achevée* qu'elle n'était'.

1. 19. *je n'entends rien à toutes ces balivernes* 'I understand nothing of this nonsense'. 'Ne rien *entendre* (or *comprendre*) à qlqch.' is an idiom with the same dative of the remoter object that can be used with *trouver, reconnaître*. Cf. Eve, § 144.

PAGE 12.

SCÈNE V.

1. 2. *Cathos, Madelon* is left out in the original edition.

1. 3. *ma chère* was a favourite expression used by the *Précieuses* in addressing each other, so that satirical writers even used '*une chère*' instead of '*une précieuse*'.

la forme enfoncée dans la matière. See Appendix, p. 93. The expressions 'forme' and 'matière' are taken from scholastic philosophy, which distinguishes 'forma' and 'materia' as the two principles which constitute the whole universe. The various things of which the universe consists have arisen by the addition of determinant forms to the indeterminate matter, which thus receives definite attributes. In living beings, soul is form, body is matter. Hence Cathos means that Gorgibus' soul is the slave of his body. The whole theory may be traced back to Thomas Aquinas (+1274), who himself owed it to Aristotle.

1. 4. *son intelligence est épaisse*. See Appendix, p. 93.

1. 7. *J'ai peine...que je puisse*. The subjunctive is used with *que* because of the virtual negation that lies in '*J'ai peine à me persuader*'. Cf. Eve, § 239.

1. 9. *une naissance plus illustre*. See Introduction, p. xxvii.

SCÈNE VI.

1. 15. *vous veut venir voir*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.
 1. 17. *un nécessaire*. See Appendix, p. 95.
 1. 18. *si vous êtes en commodité d'être visibles*. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 19. *Dame* 'why, egad!' Its original meaning is 'Lord!' not 'our Lady' (cf. the old French *dame dieu* 'Lord God' and the feudal term *vidame* meaning 'vice-lord').

1. 20. *la filofie*. Marotte mangles the word 'philosophie'. Similarly in *Les Femmes savantes* (II. 6) the servant Martine replies to Bélise who blames her grammatical mistakes:

'Mon Dieu! je n'avons pas *étugué* comme vous,
 Et je parlons tout droit comme on parle cheux nous'.

In the same scene Martine answers to Bélise's reproachful question, 'Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire?' by the words 'Qui parle d'offenser *grand'mère* ni *grand-père*?' and in *La Jalousie du Barbouillé* (6) when the Doctor says '*Audi, quæso*, aurait dit Cicéron', Le Barbouillé replies 'Oh! ma foi, *si se rompt*, si se casse, ou si se brise, je ne m'en mets guère en peine'. Marotte's *filofie* is taken from Cyrano de Bergerac's (1619—1655) *Le Pédant joué* (the source also of one of the most amusing scenes of Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin*), in which one of the replies given by the peasant Gareau to a swaggerer is 'Si vous pensiais (= pensiez) que je devisiesme (= devais) entendre tous ces tintamarres-là ('hubbub'), comme vous autres Latiniseurs, dame nanain ('no'). Et vous, comme guiebe (=diable) deharnachez-vous ('to unharness') votre *Philophie*?'

le Grand Cyre. The edition of 1682 leaves *Grand* out. See Introduction, p. xxvii.

PAGE 13.

1. 1. *Le moyen de souffrir cela?* Cf. note to p. 7, 18.
 1. 3. *Il me l'a nommé* 'he told me his name was'. *Nommer* with a double accusative and a dative of the remoter object seems not to occur in modern French, though it is quite usual to say '*je vous nommerai plusieurs personnes*' and '*on le nomme Pierre*'.
 1. 4. *un marquis!* Edition of 1682: *un marquis! un marquis!*

1. 5. *qui aura ouï* 'who has heard'. On the future perfect used to express a supposition about a past event cf. Eve, § 176.

1. 8. *cette salle basse*. The *salle* was generally on the ground-floor, as Furetière's dictionary (1690) remarks, although '*il y a aussi des salles hautes, des salles à donner le bal, à faire noces*'.

1. 11. *le conseiller des grâces*. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 13. *parler chrétien* 'to speak like a Christian'. *Chrétien* was and is still sometimes used in French, as *Christian* is in English, in the general sense of 'man', 'human being' ('players...that neither having the accents of *Christians*, nor the gait of *Christians*' Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III. 2). Thus *L'École des Femmes*, II. 3 '*Et jamais je ne vis un plus hideux chrétien* ('man'). Furetière explains the proverbial expression '*il n'est pas chrétien*' by '*il ne fait pas ce que les autres font*', and in one of La Fontaine's tales the idea 'I have no wife' is expressed by '*Je suis sans chrétienne*'. So *parler chrétien* is not 'to speak the language of Christians', but 'to speak the language of men, a language which can be understood'.

1. 15. *d'en salir la glace* 'to defile its plate, its brightness'.

SCÈNE VII.

1. 18. *deux porteurs, sc. de chaise*. See Introduction, p. xxx.

According to Mlle des Jardins (see Introduction, p. xxxiv) Molière, who acted the part of Mascarille, appeared in the following ridiculous equipment: 'sa perruque était si grande, qu'elle balayait la place à chaque fois qu'il faisait la révérence, et son chapeau si petit, qu'il était aisé de juger que le marquis le portait bien plus souvent dans la main que sur la tête; son rabat se pouvait appeler un honnête peignoir ('dressing-gown'), et ses canons semblaient n'être faits que pour servir de caches aux enfants qui jouent à cligne-musette ('hide and seek').... Un brandon ('fire-brand') de galands ('ribbons') lui sortait de sa poche comme d'une corne d'abondance, et ses souliers étaient si couverts de rubans, qu'il ne m'est pas possible de vous dire s'ils étaient de roussi ('Russian leather'), de vache d'Angleterre ou de maroquin; du moins sais-je bien qu'ils avaient un demi-pied de haut, et que j'étais fort en peine de savoir comment des talons si hauts et si délicats pouvaient porter le corps du marquis, ses rubans, ses canons et sa poudre'.

PAGE 14.

1. 1. *Dame*. Cf. p. 12, 19.

1. 2. *que nous soyons entrés*, another instance of the greater liberty allowed in the seventeenth century as to the sequence of tenses, the preterite indefinite being really a historical tense. Cf. p. 16, 9 and note to p. 7, 18. Thus *Les Femmes savantes*, I. 1, 'Je n'ai pas empêché qu'à vos perfections Il n'ait continué ses adorations'.

1. 4. *mes plumes*. The fashionable hat of the time was either of beaver or felt; its form was low, but it was provided with enormous borders and decorated with a big bunch of feathers.

1. 5. *imprimer mes souliers en boue*. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 15. *Ces canailles-là* 'those scoundrels'. *La canaille*, originally a collective noun (borrowed from Italian and meaning 'mob'), is also applied to single persons. Cf. the English word 'rascal', which formerly meant 'plebs'.

1. 16. *s'osent jouer à moi* 'dare to set me at defiance'. On *se jouer à qlqn.* 'to attack somebody inconsiderately' and the various other constructions of *jouer* ('une comédie', 'du violon', 'au whist', 'se jouer de qlqn.') cf. Eve, Appendix II.

PAGE 15.

1. 1. *tout à l'heure* is here synonymous with 'aussitôt, tout de suite'. At the present day this use of 'tout à l'heure' is considered antiquated: the idiom is however still usual with the meaning 'just now'.

1. 2. *Il est raisonnable* may mean in the seventeenth century either 'he is reasonable' or 'it is reasonable'. The latter idea would now be expressed by '*c'est raisonnable*' (Eve, § 72). Here both meanings suit the context equally well, but there are examples enough in which the impersonal meaning of the pronoun *il* is undoubted, thus in our play, p. 33, 9 (p. 34, 1, agrees however with the modern use), and *Le Dépit amoureux*, I. 3 (Éraste), 'Enfin, quand j'aime bien, j'aime fort que l'on m'aime. (Valère) *Il est très-naturel, et j'en suis bien de même*'. The edition of 1682 (and so perhaps Molière himself) took the *il* of our passage personally, it has '*Il est raisonnable, celui-là*'.

1. 8. *On obtient tout de moi* 'people may get anything from me'.

1. 9. *de la bonne façon*, 'in the right manner'. Cf. note to p. 10, 10, and the modern idiom '*prendre le bon chemin*' ('the right way').

1. 10. *me reprendre tantôt* 'fetch me by and by'.

au Louvre. On the site of an ancient hunting château called *Louvre*, on the right bank of the Seine, Philippe Auguste (1180—1223)

erected a fortified castle which was in the fourteenth century fitted up as a royal residence. Of the old buildings however no trace is now left. Under François I. (1515—1547) the foundation of the present palace was laid, to the enlargement of which most of his successors contributed (especially Catherine de Médicis, Henri IV., Louis XIV., and in our century Napoléon III.). One of its enlargements had been the cause of Molière's losing his first play-house at Paris (see Introduction, p. ix).

au petit coucher. The King's going to bed (*coucher*) as well as his getting up (*lever*) was subject to a minutely regulated etiquette. First came *le grand coucher*: in the presence of his courtiers the King was undressed, spoke his prayers, chose one of the noblemen to carry his candlestick, took his night-gown and then dismissed the greater part of the assembly. Now followed *le petit coucher*, to which only princes of the blood and the chief lords of the King's household were admitted: the King finished his undressing, received his towel from the lord chamberlain, fixed the hour at which he would get up the following day and the dress which he intended to wear. Then he went to bed, and the assembly retired except the King's doctor and valets de chambre. Mascarille gives himself here the appearance of a man of very high rank. See Introduction, p. xxxii.

SCÈNE VIII.

1. 14. Cf. note to l. 1.

PAGE 16.

SCÈNE IX.

1. 11. *je m'inscris en faux contre*, 'I demur to'. The expression is a law term which has become colloquial; *s'inscrire en faux* is used of the defendant who undertakes to prove that the documents produced by the plaintiff against him are false.

1. 12. *accuse juste* 'speaks the truth' belongs to the list of idioms given by Eve, § 158 in which adjectives are used as adverbs. With the following verbs *juste* is so used: *chanter, deviner, raisonner, frapper, tirer, peser, mesurer*.

1. 13. *faire pic, repic et capot*, 'to outdo', taken from the card game 'piquet'. *Pic, repic*, and *capot* are three particularly good chances of the game: at the first the player is allowed to reckon sixty points instead of thirty, at the second ninety instead of thirty, at the last he

gains forty points. In familiar French *capot* is used with the metaphorical meanings 'confounded, confused' in the idioms: 'faire qlqn. *capot*' ('Nos amis nous ont faits *capot*' Béranger), 'être *c.*', 'rester *c.*', 'demeurer *c.*' Hence the German *kaput* (with short accented *u*) in the familiar expressions '*kaput sein, machen, reiszen, schlagen*'. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 14. *dans Paris* 'within Paris'. *Dans* with the names of towns is used to mean 'within the walls of, inside' in contrast with *hors de* 'outside of'. Cf. Eve, § 159^a, II.

1. 15. *Votre complaisance...la libéralité de ses louanges*. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 16. *nous n'avons garde...de* 'we take care not to'. On the omission of the second part of the negative cf. Eve, § 290. The meaning of the idiom 'to take care not to do something' could easily develop from the original meaning 'to take no care to do something'.

1. 17. *donner...votre flatterie*. See Appendix, p. 93. *Donner* is here used as in '*donner dans un piège, dans une embuscade*', 'to fall into a snare, an ambush'; cf. Eve, § 112 and note to p. 9, 27. For the use of *sérieux* and *doux* as nouns, cf. note to p. 8, 6. The preposition *de* before *notre sérieux* denotes the instrument. Eve, § 130, Obs. 2.

1. 20. *Madame* was a title only due to the wives of princes, dukes, noblemen, magistrates and high *gens de robe*, but was often usurped by women of lower rank, who (even when married) could only claim the title *mademoiselle*. 'L'abus', Furetière says, 'a crû à tel point, que les servantes se veulent faire appeler *Madame*'. Madelon being the daughter of the citizen Gorgibus, and therefore rightfully a *demoiselle*, has in her vanity evidently instructed her lackey and her servant (cf. p. 29, 3) to address her as *Madame*. Also Mascarille (p. 33, 13) gives the two *Précieuses* a title which is not due to them. *Mesdames*, p. 16, 3, and p. 17, 21, is however unobjectionable. 'On dit...au pluriel *Mesdames* à une assemblée de femmes de quelque condition qu'elles soient' (Furetière).

PAGE 17.

1. 1. *les commodités de la conversation*. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 2. *au moins*. For the place of this adverbial expression, cf. note to p. 4, 7.

y a-t-il sûreté. A noun following 'il y a' may still be used

without any article, when it is not intended to point to a single thing of its kind. Thus '*il y a erreur dans le calcul*' (admitted by the Academy), and always in the idioms '*il y a lieu or sujet de craindre*'. In our play we have '*il y a manière*', p. 26, 12, but '*il y aurait de l'impertinence*', p. 1, 8.

1. 5. *franchise*. None of the present meanings of the word (among which the most frequent ones are: immunity, frankness) suffices here. 'Franchise' is here and p. 36, 17 'liberty'. Furetière says '*franchise signifie chez les poètes et les amants liberté*'; thus Racine 'Je vis sans déplaisir ma *franchise* asservie'.

des yeux. Edition of 1682: *deux yeux*.

1. 6. *aux libertés* 'to the liberty of people': the plural indicates that Mascarille does not speak of his liberty only, but of every one's liberty. Similarly the plural is used, p. 34, 14, because Mascarille speaks of his own and Jodelet's liberty, and in *L'Étourdi*, v. 8, 'Il n'est guère de cœurs qui puissent échapper Aux traits dont à l'abord vous savez les frapper, Et mille *libertés* à vos chaînes offertes Semblent vous enrichir chaque jour...'

1. 7. *de Turc à More* 'as a Turk does a Moor; without pity'. The idiom is an allusion to the cruel treatment of the Moors in the North of Africa (Algiers) by the Turks, who governed the country from the beginning of the sixteenth century. (The conquest of Algiers by the French commenced 1830.) For the form of the phrase, compare '*traiter de haut en bas*' (with contempt). The idiom '*traiter avec quelqu'un de Turc à More*' seems also to have been in use: thus Voiture (1598—1648): 'Quand je traiterai désormais avec vous, faites état (be prepared) que c'est de Turc à More'.

d'abord qu'on les approche. *D'abord que* was a synonym frequently occurring in seventeenth century writers of *aussitôt que*, *dès que*. Thus *L'École des Femmes*, v. 9: 'Je n'en ai point douté *d'abord que* je l'ai vue'.

1. 8. *ils se mettent sur leur garde meurtrière* 'they put themselves on their guard for a murderous attack'. *Garde meurtrière* is according to Littré an old fencing term meaning 'position d'attaque où l'on essaie de frapper son adversaire'; but it seems not to occur in old books on fencing, and is mentioned by Richelet's dictionary (1680) as an expression proper to comic style. The combination of the two words *garde* and *meurtrière* forms an oxymoron (juxtaposition of notions or ideas that are opposed to each other, e.g. 'Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!').

Dove-feather'd raven! wolvisb-ravening lamb! Despised substance of divinest show! Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st, A damned saint, an honourable villain!' Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 2).

1. 9. *je m'en vais gagner au pied*. On *s'en aller* followed by an infinitive, cf. p. 9, 29. *Gagner au pied*, 'to run away' is synonymous with the familiar expressions '*gagner la guérite*', '*g. les champs*', '*g. le taillis*', '*g. la porte*'. In *gagner au pied* one of these substantives is understood, and *à* indicates the means, as in '*s'enfuir à toutes jambes*', '*fouler aux pieds*' (cf. Eve, § 151). An example from Scarron (1610—1660) shows the meaning of the idiom clearly: '... comme devant les chiens *Gagne au pied* le timide lièvre'.

1. 10. *je veux caution bourgeoise*, one of the expressions enumerated in the note to p. 10, 3.

Caution bourgeoise, 'city security, security of rich and resident citizens', as Cotgrave (1611) translates; thus in the example given by Furetière, 'On ne veut point prêter aux grands seigneurs sans une *caution bourgeoise*'. Then metaphorically as here (translate 'good security') and in *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*, 5 (le Marquis) 'Parbleu! je la (i.e. cette pièce) garantis de détestable'. (Dorante) 'La *caution* n'est pas *bourgeoise*'.

1. 13. *Amilcar*. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 16. *prud'homie* 'honesty, innocence' is at present obsolete and supplanted by *honnêteté*. It is formed from *prud'homme* 'honest man'. The apostrophe used in the spelling of both words points to their derivation, *un prud'homme* originally being '*un preu d'homme*', 'a brave one of a man' (cf. '*un drôle d'homme*') in which *preu* is the Latin *prōd-* of *prōdest* 'he is useful'.

1. 13. *vous tend les bras...quart d'heure*. On the use of the present tense with some expression like 'since a certain time' in speaking of actions begun some time ago and still continuing, cf. Eve, § 169^a. If the expression of time consists in *il y a...*, the action may be put in a subordinate sentence with *que* depending on *il y a* ('*il y a un quart d'heure qu'il vous tend les bras*'), or the action may precede in an independent sentence and be followed by *il y a...* without any connecting link. The latter construction is alone possible if the subject of the action is expressed by a relative pronoun as here.

1. 19. *contentez...de vous embrasser*. See Appendix, p. 93.

après s'être peigné et avoir ajusté ses canons. See Introduction, p. xxx.

At the end of the sixteenth century those who wore short stockings

which did not join the *hauts-de-chausses* used to cover the interval by *genouillères* ('knee-bands'). These *genouillères* were the commencement of the famous *canons* ('knee-cuffs'). At the time when *Les Précieuses ridicules* was written, and for some time later, the fashion was to have the *canons* very long. In *L'École des Maris*, I. I, Sganarelle ridicules them speaking of them as '...ces grands *canons* où, comme en des entraves (trammels), On met tous les matins ses deux jambes esclaves, Et par qui nous voyons ces Messieurs les galants Marcher carquillés (spread) ainsi que des volants (shuttle-cock)'.

PAGE 18.

1. 1. ...*en pourrions-nous dire*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

Il faudrait être...le centre du bon goût. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 5. *hors de Paris, il n'y a point de salut* is considered a scurrilous imitation of the Catholic sentence 'Nulla salus extra ecclesiam'. It is not without parallels, and Molière's parody seems not to have been the first of its kind. Voltaire wrote a century later (1777): *Point de salut au théâtre sans la fureur des passions*'. See Introduction, p. xxix.

1. 6. *les honnêtes gens* did not mean exactly the same in Molière's time as it would now ('honest, respectable'); it was equivalent to 'les gens comme il faut'. Bussy-Rabutin gives in a letter of 1679 among other definitions the following one: '*L'honnête homme* est un homme poli et qui sait vivre'. Thus it was possible to say 'Qu'il a l'air noble et doux, qu'il danse en *honnête homme*!' (Boisrobert, 1656), and 'j'appris encore ce qui perfectionne la jeunesse et rend *honnête homme*, car j'appris encore toutes sortes de jeux aux cartes et aux dés' (Hamilton, 1720). Translate 'men of fashion'.

1. 8. *Il y fait un peu crotté*. This seems to be a very mild description of the real condition of the streets; Sauval, the historian of Paris (about 1620—about 1670), reports that 100000 francs were raised yearly to carry the dirt out of Paris, and still 'il n'y a point de ville au monde plus *boueuse et sale*'; besides, the dirt was so sticking that it had given rise to the proverbial saying 'il tient comme *boue de Paris*'.

1. 9. *la chaise...mauvais temps*. See Introduction, p. xxx.

1. 11. *quel bel esprit est des vôtres?* 'what great wit belongs to your company?'

1. 14. *nous sommes en passe de l'être*, 'we are in a fair way of being so'. In the game of 'mall' (*mail*) a player is said to be *en passe*, when he is so placed as to be able to pass through the hoop at the next

stroke. Hence the metaphorical sense of being in a fair way to get something or being qualified for it. Thus in *Le Misanthrope*, III. 1: 'Et je crois, par le rang que me donne ma race, Qu'il est fort peu d'emplois dont je ne sois en passe'. Note also the following expressions quoted by Furetière 'il est en passe d'avoir cette fille en mariage, de gagner son procès, de faire banqueroute'.

1. 16. *du Recueil des pièces choisies*. See Introduction, p. xxiii.

1. 17. *pour être*, not 'to be', but 'as being'.

1. 21. *sans une demi-douzaine de beaux-esprits*. See Introduction, p. xxx.

PAGE 19.

1. 1. *de la dernière obligation*. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 4. *Ce sont ceux*. Edition of 1682: *Ce sont eux*.

1. 5. *il y en a tel* 'there are some'. On the use of *tel* in the sense of an indefinite rather than of a demonstrative pronoun cf. Eve, § 79, 1.

1. 6. *la seule fréquentation*. Cf. note to p. 9, 23.

donner bruit de connaissance. Cf. note to p. 10, 3.

1. 11. *sont de*, 'are part of'. Cf. Eve, § 126.

d'un bel esprit. Edition of 1682: *du bel esprit*.

1. 13. *de prose et de vers*. Edition of 1682: *de prose ou de vers*.

à point nommé 'just at the right time'. On the use of *à* in speaking of time cf. Eve, § 153, on the noun *point* without the article, Eve, § 21. An idiom of similar formation is *à heure marquée*, 'at the appointed time' (La Bruyère).

1. 16. *un sixain* is a stanza of six lines.

1. 17. *sur les huit heures* 'about eight o'clock'. In speaking of time *sur* is not only used, where one thing supervenes on another (Eve, § 164, 4), but also synonymously with *vers* (thus '*sur le soir*', '*sur la fin de la semaine*').

1. 21. *je ne donnerais pas un clou de* 'I would not give a pin's head for'. *Donnerais* seems to be against the rules on the sequence of tenses. In fact we have here a mixture of two constructions such as '*je ne donne pas un clou de tout l'esprit qu'on peut avoir*' and '*quand même on aurait beaucoup d'esprit, je n'en donnerais pas un clou*'. *Un clou à soufflet* ('a bellows-nail'), or simply *un clou*, is used in addition to a negative with the meaning of something valueless. Cf. Shakespeare, 'I prize it not a straw' (*The Winter's Tale*), 'It is not worth a

blackberry' (*Troilus*). Similarly Voltaire says 'les vœux...de l'univers entier ne servent pas d'un clou à soufflet'. The preposition *de* in our passage expresses the cause (as after verbs of praise, blame, requital such as 'louer, blâmer, récompenser', Eve, § 123, Obs. 2) not the price. We find it again in *Le Malade imaginaire*, I. 7 'je ne donnerais pas un sou de notre métier'.

1. 22. *qu'on peut avoir*. For the meaning of *peut*, cf. note to p. 5, 1. The present tense would be against the modern usage (Eve, § 177), but was not against the usage of the seventeenth century; thus *L'Avare*, IV. 1 'J'y ferai tout ce que je puis, et n'oublierai aucune chose'.

1. 23. *c'est renchérir sur le ridicule* 'it is the height of absurdity'. Cf. note to p. 4, 11.

1. 24. *jusqu'au moindre petit quatrain* 'even the slightest little quatrain'. Cf. Eve, § 167.

1. 26. *s'il fallait*. Molière often uses *il faut que* where he wishes to lay stress on the *reality* rather than *necessity* of an event's taking place: thus *Don Juan*, I. 1 'Je ne sais pas, de vrai, quel homme il peut être, *s'il faut* qu'il nous ait fait cette perfidie' ('if really he has committed this perfidy against us'). Translate 'should I be asked'.

qu'on vint à me demander, literally 'that I happened to be asked'. On the different constructions of *venir* (v. *faire* qlqch. 'to come and do something', v. *de faire* qlqch. 'just to have done something', v. *à faire* qlqch. 'to happen to do something') cf. Eve, Appendix III., p. 301.

1. 27. *si j'aurais vu*, instead of *si j'avais vu*, as would now be necessary. Frequently we find in the seventeenth century the use of a future or conditional in the principal sentence leading to the use of a future or conditional instead of a present or imperfect in the subordinate sentence with *que*. Thus *Don Juan*, I. 1 's'il fallait (cf. note to l. 26) qu'il en vint quelque chose à ses oreilles, je dirais hautement que tu *aurais* menti'.

PAGE 20.

1. 1. *de n'avoir pas des premiers* 'not to be one of the first to have'. Cf. Eve, § 126, Obs.

1. 3. *une Académie de beaux esprits*. See Introduction, p. xxvi.

1. 6. *je m'en escrime un peu* 'I indulge a little in it' (i.e. in writing poetry). *S'escrimer de qlqch.* is used in familiar style instead of *s'exercer, s'appliquer à qlqch.*

1. 8. *ruelles*. See Introduction, p. xxvi.

1. 9. *sonnets*. The sonnet is a small lyrical poem, the form of which is well described by Boileau (*L'Art Poétique*, II.): '(Apollon) Voulut qu'en deux quatrains (stanzas of four lines) de mesure pareille La rime avec deux sons frappât huit fois l'oreille, Et qu'en suite six vers artistement rangés Fussent en deux tercets (stanzas of three lines) par le sens partagés'. Apparently invented in Italy and certainly much cultivated there (its master was Petrarch), it was introduced into French literature by Mélin de Saint-Gelais (+1558). The justifiable admiration of the seventeenth century for a good sonnet found its famous expression in Boileau's words (*L'Art Poétique*, II.): 'Un sonnet sans défaut vaut seul un long poème'.

épigrammes. The epigram according to Boileau 'N'est souvent qu'un bon mot de deux rimes orné' (*L'Art Poétique*, II.). In Greek the name *ἐπίγραμμα* (inscription) was originally given to actual inscriptions on monuments, and only later restricted to a short poem pointedly expressed. In France Jean Marot (1463—1523) was one of the first who cultivated the epigram, and since his time many of the principal French authors (La Fontaine, Boileau, Racine, Voltaire) have excelled in it.

1. 10. *les énigmes et les portraits*. See Introduction, p. xxiv and xxvi.

1. 11. *furieusement*. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 16. *terriblement*. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 21. *mettre en madrigaux toute l'histoire romaine* is possibly a satirical allusion to a translation of Tacitus into *octaves* ('stanzas of eight lines'), with which a certain La Fosse was occupied. Unfortunately it is not known whether this happened before or after the composition of *Les Précieuses ridicules*. See also Introduction, p. xxvii. The madrigal is a short poem of one stanza which 'Respire la douceur, la tendresse et l'amour' (Boileau, *L'Art Poétique*, II.). It was one of those Italian forms of poetry which were imitated in France in the sixteenth century. In Italy its original name was *mandriale* (from *mandria*, 'flock', because it was at first a popular rustic poem, which was introduced into literature by Italian poets of the fourteenth century, especially by Petrarch); later the forms *madriale*, *madrigale* are found. As to the form of the madrigal much more freedom was allowed in France than in Italy.

1. 23. *du dernier beau* 'of the last degree of beauty'. Translate: 'supremely beautiful'. Cf. note to p. 8, 6, and Appendix, p. 94.

J'en retiens un exemplaire, literally 'I bespeak one copy', translate 'I should like to have one copy'.

PAGE 21.

1. 1. *Je vous en promets à chacune un* 'I promise you each a copy'; *à chacune* is in apposition to *vous*. Cf. Eve, § 51, (2).

des mieux reliés 'one of the most handsomely bound'. Cf. note to p. 20, 1.

1. 2. *au-dessous de ma condition* 'beneath my social position'.

1. 5. *die*. Vaugelas writes, 1647 '*quoi que l'on die* est fort en usage et en parlant et en écrivant, bien que *quoi que l'on dise* ne soit pas mal dit'. As early as 1687, Thomas Corneille in his remarks on Vaugelas affirms that 'la plupart de ceux qui écrivent bien sont persuadés que *die* n'est bon qu'en vers', and in 1704, the Academy states that *dise* is alone used. Molière by no means avoided the form *die* (*L'Impromptu de Versailles*: 'Voulez-vous que je vous *die*?'), and in the famous *quoi qu'on die* of Trissotin's sonnet (*Les Femmes savantes*, III. 2) it is not the form *die*, but the triviality of the idea which is ridiculed.

un impromptu 'improvised poem'. See Introduction, p. xxiii.

1. 6. *une duchesse de mes amies*. See Introduction, p. xxxii. Here as p. 19, 11 the partitive *de* is used without being preceded by a partitive word. '*Une duchesse de mes amies*' is equivalent to '*une duchesse qui est de mes amies*'.

1. 7. *fort sur les impromptus*, (the second *p* should be sounded: *impromptus*). *Sur* has here the meaning 'as regards', as in Montesquieu's '*Les Romains étaient le peuple du monde le plus religieux sur le serment*'.

1. 13. Just as in a great number of expressions the noun following a verb is left without any article (cf. note to p. 10, 3), so there are others in which a verb is followed by *à*, and a noun without an article: thus *songer à mal*, *mettre à fin*, *pousser à bout*, *prendre à cœur*, *donner à compte*, and others.

1. 15. Mascarille's *impromptu* looks like a parody of Corneille's *Ode sur un prompt amour* (see Introduction, p. xxiii). The last line *Au voleur!* etc. resembles the refrain of a poem (published in a collection of 1614), '*O voleur! ô voleur! ô voleur! Rends-moi mon cœur, que tu m'as pris*'. The English dramatist John Crowne (1661—1698), in

his comedy *Sir Courtly Nice*, has imitated Mascarille's *impromptu* as follows:

'As I gaz'd, unaware,
On a face so fair,
Your cruel eye
Lay watching by
To snatch my heart;
Which you did wi' such art,
That away wi't you ran,
Whilst I looked on,
To my ruin and grief;
Stop, thief! stop, thief!'

1. 16. *le dernier galant*. See Appendix, p. 94, and note to p. 8, 6.

1. 18. *ne sent point le pédant*. See Introduction, p. xxvi.

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1. 6. *dites-vous? Ce sont là....* Edition of 1682: *dites-vous là? Ce sont....*

Ce sont là de ces sortes de choses...payer 'those are (such) things which are beyond price'. Cf. Eve, § 126.

1. 7. *se peuvent payer*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 10. *Tudieu!* Just as *parbleu!* is *par dieu!* softened down, so *par la vertu dieu* (*dieu* in the sense of a genitive) has been changed into *vertubieu* (quoted by Furetière) and also into *tudieu*. The full form occurs, e.g. in a political song:

'Laissons la barbe en pointe
Au cousin de Richelieu,
Car, *par la vertudieu!*
Qui serait assez osé
Pour prétendre la lui raser?'

Compare also the two transformations of *Notre-Dame* into *Tredame* (*Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, III. 5) and into *Notredinse* (*Don Juan*, II. 1) and of the English *God's wounds* into *zounds*.

vous avez le goût bon 'you have good taste'. On *goût* treated like a part of the human body, cf. Eve, § 60, Obs. 1.

1. 14. *façon de parler naturelle*. See Introduction, p. xxvi.

1. 17. *m'amuse à*, either 'amuse myself' or 'dawdle'.

1. 18. *Que vous semble.* *Que* is the predicate and not the subject of the sentence, and the whole expression is one of those in which an impersonal verb is used without *il*, like '*reste à savoir*'. Cf. Eve, § 13.

PAGE 23.

1. 1. *il semble que ce soit un chat.* It seems so to Mascarille probably because he feels some relation between *tapinois* and *tapir* ('to squat down'), though etymologically the two words are perhaps not related to each other.

un chat qui vienne. We should rather expect '*qui vient*'; the subjunctive may be due to an influence of the mood of the principal sentence upon that of the dependent sentence similar to the influence of the tense of the principal sentence upon that of the dependent sentence pointed out in the note to p. 19, 27. Another example from Corneille is: '*Quoique ce soit un bien que l'un et l'autre attende, De crainte de le perdre, aucun ne le demande*'.

1. 10. *que j'ai fait dessus* 'which I have made to it'. On the use of *dessus* as an adverb meaning 'on it' cf. Eve, § 55.

1. 14. *Les gens de qualité...appris.* Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (1670—1741) has brought this passage into the following metrical form, '*Un grand seigneur sait tout sans avoir rien appris*'. Both forms, the one in prose and the one in verse, have become proverbial.

1. 17. *hem, hem.* The word *hem* is used as an interrogative interjection (thus p. 14, 8), but also to express in spelling a slight cough as here, and also in *Les Fâcheux*, 1. 3 '*La, la, hem, hem, écoute avec soin, je te prie*'.

PAGE 24.

1. 1. *à la cavalière* 'like a nobleman'. Furetière, when speaking of the expression '*des vers à la cavalière*', sarcastically remarks '*c'est-à-dire, qui sont méchants*'.

1. 4. *que voilà un air qui est passionné.* The original force of the imperative in *voilà* ('behold there') is here quite forgotten. '*Voilà un air qui est passionné*' being felt as a synonymous expression with '*c'est un air passionné*' the sentence '*que c'est un air passionné*' could easily call forth a synonymous sentence '*que voilà un air qui est passionné*'. Similarly Molière says elsewhere '*Que voilà bien parler!*' Further still

go examples where *voilà* is used with the impersonal pronoun *il*, as if it were an impersonal verb, like *il y a*, e.g. 'Ne *voilà-t-il* pas une passion bien exprimée !' (Boileau).

1. 5. *Est-ce qu'on n'en meurt point?* The exaggerated expression '*mourir de* quelque chose' (to be overpowered by something) was very fashionable from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and is reckoned among the numerous importations of Spanish words and fashions that took place under Henri IV. (1589—1610), and later still. Sully (1560—1641) in his *Mémoires* ridicules the Spaniardised courtiers who '*criaient en voix dolante: il en faut mourir!*'; similarly the satirist Régnier (1573—1613) speaking of a troublesome young fop, '*...Mais, ami, laissons-le discourir, Dire cent et cent fois: Il en faudrait mourir!*'

1. 6. *chromatique*, when an adjective, is used as an epithet of one of the three scales, namely the one which proceeds by semitones and consists of twelve notes ('la gamme *chromatique*'). As a substantive it is according to Littré used in conversation with the meaning, 'passage langoureux, mou, plaintif' (Littré gives the following instance from Dancourt, 1687, 'Ah, madame, vous ne m'aimez plus, puisque vous êtes insensible au *chromatique* dont cet air est tout rempli'). This substantive is however a masculine, while Madelon uses a feminine *la chromatique*. What Madelon really means by it is not known; we may suppose that she herself does not know exactly,—or does she use it instead of *le chromatique* and mean 'doleful tenderness'?

1. 8. *Au voleur!* is repeated in the edition of 1682.

1. 11. *le fin des choses*. Cf. note to p. 8, 6. The meaning of *le fin* is here the same as in '*savoir le fin d'un jeu, d'un métier*', and pretty well explained by Furetière's paraphrase '*ce qu'il y a...de plus subtil, de plus secret*'. Translate 'secrets, perfection'.

1. 19. *A quoi donc passez-vous le temps?* The edition of 1682 adds *Mesdames* after *temps*.

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1. 1. *Nous avons été...divertissements*. See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 4. *aussi bien...nouvelle* 'the more so as a new one is to be acted'. Similarly '*je ne veux point y aller; aussi bien est-il trop tard*' (Acad.).

1. 6. *Cela n'est pas de refus* 'that is not to be refused'.

1. 8. *car*. It has been pointed out that the word *car* occurs so

rarely in Molière's works that it seems as if he did not altogether disapprove of the attempt of some purists (Gomberville, Baro) to proscribe *car* from French literature. Molière generally uses *et* instead of it, e.g. in our play, p. 11, 10.

1. 13. *le parterre*. The 'pit' was the cheapest part of the theatre (the price of admission to it being generally 15 sous, equivalent to 3-4 francs of modern money); it was first provided with seats in 1782; in Molière's time the audience in the *parterre* had to stand. Only the poorer part of the audience therefore went into the *parterre*. People in better circumstances took places in the *loges* (price one to three livres, equivalent to four to twelve francs of modern money). Apparently about the middle of the seventeenth century, it became customary for fashionable young men (as it was already at an earlier time in England) to sit on both sides of the stage on straw-chairs (price: three livres), an 'incommodité épouvantable', as a contemporary writer remarks, for 'cela gâte tout, et il ne faut quelquefois qu'un insolent pour tout troubler'. That Molière looked upon the custom in the same light appears from his *Les Fâcheux*, I. 1. The fine gentlemen by no means kept quiet, but often talked together in a loud voice and criticised the actors and the piece.

1. 14. *ose nous contredire*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 16. *devant que*. The preposition and adverb *avant* and the conjunction *avant que* are required in speaking of time, and *devant* is only used in speaking of place. Before and during the seventeenth century *devant que* however occurs frequently with reference to time, and Vaugelas considers both *avant que* and *devant que* as good, though the former 'est plus de la cour et plus en usage'. Accordingly we find in Molière's *L'Étourdi*, v. 2 'Que si ('if then') comme *devant* il vous faut encor suivre, J'y consens', and in Racine's *Les Plaidcurs*, III. 1 'Et *devant* qu'il soit peu je veux en profiter'.

les chandelles. Till 1720, tallow-candles were in use for lighting the theatre; wax-candles were then introduced (first in the *Opéra*) and after them lamps, which were supplanted by gas-light in 1822.

PAGE 26.

1. 1. *il pourrait être quelque chose de ce que vous dites* 'there might be some truth in what you say', literally 'something of what you say might be true'. *Être* has here the meaning 'to be true' as in 'cela est', 'cela n'est pas', 'n'est-ce pas?'

1. 5. *Aux grands comédiens.* When Molière wrote *Les Précieuses ridicules* there were three regular theatres at Paris (not to speak of suburban stages or of Italian actors): the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, the oldest play-house in Paris (opened about 1550), where Pierre Corneille's chief plays had been for the first time acted; the *Théâtre du Marais* (about 1600), where Pierre Corneille's early plays, including *Le Cid*, were acted for the first time; and the *Théâtre de Bourbon* (cf. note to p. 1, 20) used by Molière's company for a time. The actors of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, called *Troupe royale* and here ironically 'les grands comédiens', were Molière's chief rivals and apparently, notwithstanding his satirical attacks, superior to him in the representation of tragedies. In 1673 the company of the *Théâtre du Marais*, and in 1680 that of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, were united with the *Troupe du roi* (formerly Molière's company), and the body thus formed is still continued by the *Société de la Comédie-Française* or *Théâtre-Français*. The change made in 1680 explains the variant of the edition of 1682: *Aux comédiens de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, instead of *Aux grands comédiens*.

1. 6. *les autres* means of course Molière's company.

1. 7. *Réciter comme l'on parle* was Molière's ideal of dramatic recitation, *faire ronfler les vers* that of the actors of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne* (Montfleury, Beauchâteau, Hauteroche, etc.). The words used by Molière with regard to his rivals are perhaps exaggerated: at any rate for tragedies the public preferred the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*.

1. 12. *il y a manière* 'there is a way'. Cf. note to p. 17, 2.

1. 15. *ma petite-oie.* *La petite-oie* means originally according to Furetière 'ce qu'on retranche d'une oie, quand on l'habille pour la faire rôtir, comme les pieds, les bouts d'ailes, le cou, le foie, le gésier ('gizzard')', in short 'the giblets of a goose', or in modern French *l'abatis*. Though according to Mme de Motteville (+about 1689) a coarse and vulgar expression, it became a fashionable word for the small accessories of dress, especially ribbons and knots, with which the clothes of men were at that time profusely decorated.

La trouvez-vous...l'habit? See Appendix, p. 94. The participle *congruant* would suppose a verb *congruer* ('to congrue, agree'; Latin 'congruere'), which has however apparently not been used. The adjective *congruent* is used by some mathematical writers with the meaning of the modern *coïncident* ('coincident').

1. 18. *est bien choisi.* Edition of 1682: *en est bien choisi.*

1. 19. *C'est Perdrigeon*. *Perdrigeon*, elsewhere spelt *Perdigeon*, was the fashionable mercer of Paris. His name occurs in several writings between 1650 and 1700, for instance in Chapuzeau's comedy *L'Académie des Femmes* (1661) '...la seule petite-oie Me coûte cinq cents francs, tout en belle monnaie, Car je paye comptant; demande à Perdigeon'. In the *Livre commode des adresses* of 1692 MM. *Perdrigeon* are mentioned among those 'marchands bonnetiers...qui font un grand détail', and their address 'à la place Royale'. The use of the proper noun like a name of material may be compared with the use of names of writers or artists when they mean, not their persons, but the whole of their characteristic particularities or the whole of their productions, for instance 'il y a *du* La Fontaine dans le talent de Béranger', and 'c'est beau comme *du* Corneille'. Accordingly we expect to find 'c'est *du* *Perdrigeon*'; but the so-called partitive article, generally not used in mediæval French, has not yet become absolutely necessary in the seventeenth century: thus *L'Étourdi*, IV. 1 '...il est très-ordinaire De voir *gens* pris sur mer par quelque Turc corsaire'.

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1. 1. *ont...bon air*. Cf. note to p. 10, 3.

1. 2. *quartier* is used here in a sense ('quarter of a yard') which has become obsolete.

1. 4. *je n'ai jamais...l'ajustement*. See Appendix, p. 93.

1. 6. *Attachez...odorat*. See Appendix, p. 96. Gloves used to be perfumed, and there was an infinity of different names for them ('gants à l'Occasion, à la Nécessité, à la Phyllis, à la Cadenet, à la Frangipane' etc.) according to the perfume with which they were impregnated.

1. 9. *Je n'ai...conditionnée*. See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 10. *Et celle-là?* These words are followed in the edition of 1682 by the stage-direction 'Il donne à sentir les cheveux poudrés de sa perruque'. The fashion of powdering is of a somewhat earlier origin than that of wearing wigs. The former commenced under Henri III. (1574—1589), the latter under Louis XIII. (1610—1643). The purpose of powdering was in the seventeenth century to dry and perfume the hair after having washed it, and not, as in the eighteenth century, to give it a white appearance. The wig worn under Louis XIV. (1643—1715) by the high society was the large so-called *royale* or *in-folio*. Louis XIV. despised both fashions, that of powdering

and that of wearing a wig, but could not resist them and adopted the wig in 1673.

1. 11. *Elle est tout à fait de qualité.* See Appendix, p. 93.

le sublime. See Appendix, p. 93.

1. 16. *un louis d'or.* The *louis d'or* was first coined under Louis XIII. (1640) and was largely circulated under Louis XIV. It was called *louis* because on one side it bore the head of the king with his name, and the addition *d'or* was necessary to distinguish it from another coin, the *louis d'argent* (also called *louis blanc*). The *louis d'or* was originally equivalent to 10 *livres* (or 40 francs of modern money), later to 11—12 *livres*.

1. 17. *donner généralement sur.* Cf. notes to p. 9, 27 and p. 16, 17. *Donner sur* means still in familiar French 'to be bent upon', for instance '*donner sur un plat, un mets*'.

1. 18. *ce qu'il y a de plus beau.* In the satire of Régnier's (VIII.), quoted in the note to p. 24, 4, the fop speaks to a lady whom he protests he adores, in a vainglorious manner similar to Mascarille's: '*...il montre sa rotonde ('collar'): Cet ouvrage est-il beau?...Madame, à votre avis, ce jourd'hui suis-je bien? Suis-je pas bien chaussé? ma jambe est-elle belle? Voyez ce taffetas: la mode en est nouvelle; C'est œuvre de la Chine*'.

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1. 3. *chaussettes.* 'Understockings' of linen were worn under the stockings of silk or cloth.

1. 4. *ouvrière.* Edition of 1682: *faiseuse.* Cf. note to p. 10, 10.

1. 10. *à droit.* In the seventeenth century *à droit* and *à droite* were both used with the same meaning. Thus Boileau '*Les voyageurs sans guide assez souvent s'égarent L'un à droit, l'autre à gauche*'. The editor (Marc-Antoine Joly) of Molière's works in 1734 apparently felt *à droit* to be an archaism and changed it into *à droite*.

1. 11. *la partie n'est pas égale* 'it is not an equal match'. The contrary would be '*la partie est bien faite*'. Both expressions are taken from card-playing. *Le parti* is 'match' in another sense, e.g. in the idiom '*épouser un bon parti*' 'to make a good match'. Both *la partie* and *le parti* also mean 'party', the former in the juridical sense (e.g. *la partie adverse* 'the adverse party', *la partie intéressée* 'the party concerned'), the latter in the political sense (e.g. '*le parti du progrès*', '*un homme de parti*', '*l'esprit de parti*').

je m'en vais crier. Cf. note to p. 9, 29.

1. 15. *tour admirable dans l'esprit* is synonymous with *tour d'esprit admirable*, 'the knack of setting off things to the best advantage'. Similarly 'cet homme a un *tour d'esprit agréable*' or 'un *tour agréable dans l'esprit*' meaning 'il présente les choses sous une forme agréable'. *Tour d'esprit* is quoted as a neologism by grammarians even after 1670. Translate 'admirable dexterity of giving things an agreeable turn'.

1. 16. *votre cœur...l'écorche* is an application of a proverbial expression which seems first to occur in Rabelais' *Gargantua* (1535), where Grippeminault, who says anxiously 'Seigneur, je ne sais quelle issue sera de cette entreprise...', receives from Picrochole the answer '...vous semblez les anguilles de Melun: vous criez devant qu'on vous écorche. Laissez-les seulement venir'. The origin of the expression is uncertain, its meaning however wants no explanation.

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SCÈNE X.

1. 1. *Madame.* Cf. note to p. 16, 20.

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SCÈNE XI.

1. 1. *s'embrassant l'un l'autre.* Embraces were the usual salutation between gentlemen at that time. The exaggerated liveliness which fashionable young men affected even in saluting persons whom they scarcely knew has been repeatedly ridiculed, for instance in *Le Misanthrope*, I. 1, where Alceste reproaches his friend Philinte 'Je vous vois accabler un homme de caresses, Et témoigner pour lui les dernières tendresses: De protestations, d'offres et de serments, Vous chargez la fureur de vos embrassements; Et quand je vous demande après quel est cet homme, A peine pouvez-vous dire comme il se nomme'. De La Salle (1651—1716) in his *Règles de la bienséance* describes the manner of executing this salutation 'Ce qui se fait en portant la main droite dessus l'épaule et la gauche dessous, et en se présentant l'un à l'autre la joue gauche, sans se la toucher ni la baiser'.

1. 2. *Que je suis aise.* Cf. note to p. 8, 13.

1. 13. *C'est pousser...de la flatterie.* Edition of 1682: *de flatterie.*

1. 18. *Voyez-vous pas.* Cf. note to p. 7, 13.
qu'il faut le surcroît d'un fauteuil. See Appendix, p. 94.

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1. 2. *il ne fait que sortir.* The modern distinction between *il ne fait que sortir* ('he does nothing but go out') and *il ne fait que de sortir* ('he has just gone out') is made by grammarians of the seventeenth century, but not always observed even by the best writers of that time. It may be noted that *de* is especially avoided before an infinitive followed by *de*. Thus here and p. 37, 3, but p. 11, 17 '*où nous ne faisons que d'arriver*'.

le visage pâle. The actor Jodelet used to perform his low comic parts with his face powdered white. He is several times called in Loret's *Gazette* (appearing since 1650) '*la perle des enfarinés*' and is said to be represented on old prints '*avec une grande barbe, des moustaches noires, et le reste du visage enfariné*'.

1. 4. *Ce sont fruits.* On the want of the 'partitive article' cf. note to p. 26, 19. *Des* before *fruits* has been apparently avoided here because the latter is followed by *des*; p. 33, 8 Mascarille says '*Ce sont des marques honorables, qui...*'.

1. 7. *un brave à trois poils.* *Poil* is used in speaking of velvet with the meaning of the English 'pile' (both come from Latin *pilus* 'hair' and signify the fibres of silk which compose it). '*Velours à trois poils*' or, as Shakespeare says, 'three-pile' (*The Winter's Tale*, IV. 3) was considered a superior kind of velvet. Metaphorically *à trois poils* and 'three-piled' have then been used to designate something 'of first-rate quality', thus by Shakespeare 'Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, *Three-piled* hyperboles, spruce affectation' (*Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2, cf. also the instructive passage in *Measure for Measure*, I. 2, 28—36); and in the French expression '*un brave à trois poils*' (also the '*brave à quatre poils*' occurs, for instance, Saint-Simon writes in the eighteenth century '*Caillebot passa pour un brave à quatre poils*'). Translate here 'a paragon of heroes'.

1. 9. *Vous ne m'en devez rien* 'you are not a whit inferior to me'.

1. 12. *l'occasion* 'se dit aussi des rencontres de la guerre... La bataille de Senef (1674) fut une *occasion* bien chaude' (Furetière). With this meaning ('action, fight') the word occurs pretty often in the seventeenth century.

1. 14. *Hai, hai, hai!* Edition of 1682: *Hi, hi, hi.*

1. 16. *un régiment de cavalerie sur les galères de Malte.* 'A regiment of cavalry aboard the galleys of Malta', like our 'horse-marines', is rather a bold invention of Jodelet's; still the two short-witted *Précieuses* do not take offence at it.

1. 18. *dans l'emploi* 'in the service'. 'On dit absolument, qu'un homme est dans l'emploi, pour dire, qu'il est dans le service à l'armée' (Furetière).

1. 19. *petit officier* 'a small, an ordinary officer'. *Petit* refers here to rank and importance as in 'Tout *petit* prince a des ambassadeurs' La Fontaine, *Fables*, I. 3 and 'un *petit* marchand', 'les *petites* gens', 'le *petit* peuple'; it may also be understood of age, meaning 'young'.

1. 20. *que* 'when'. Cf. Eve, § 266, II. The sentence with *que* does not here denote a sudden occurrence, but simultaneous duration, as for instance in 'La voiture aux provisions est venue, *que* j'étais malade' (Rousseau).

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1. 5. *un furieux tendre.* Cf. note to p. 8, 6 and Appendix, P. 93.

1. 8. *demi-lune* 'half-moon' means in the language of fortification an outwork (also called a *ravelin* in French and English) composed of two faces which form a salient angle. Its name reminds us of its original position before a bastion; the ditch which separated the 'half-moon' from the bastion was rounded and formed a crescent with the two faces of the out-work.

1. 9. *au siège d'Arras.* In the seventeenth century there had been two sieges of Arras (now the chief town of the *département du Pas-de-Calais*), one in 1640 and the other in 1654. At the former a *French* army besieged Arras, which then belonged to Spain. A Spanish army advanced to relieve the town, but was repulsed, so that Arras had to surrender. At the other siege the town was held by the French, and the *Spaniards* were the besiegers. A French army succeeded in relieving Arras by a brilliant victory. Evidently the siege at which Mascarille and Jodelet pretend to have assisted and taken one of the outworks was the one of 1640.

1. 11. *une lune toute entière.* The joke is not of Molière's invention,

but repeats an anecdote told by Tallemant des Réaux (1619—1692) of a marquis de Nesle who lived about 1600. 'C'est que comme on eut proposé de faire une demi-lune, il dit: Messieurs, ne faisons rien à demi pour le service du Roi; faisons-en une toute entière'.

1. 13. *Il n'en doit bien souvenir.* Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 17. The edition of 1734 adds after *Cathos* the stage-direction: 'après avoir touché l'endroit'.

PAGE 33.

1. 2. *la dernière campagne* is an accusative of time. Cf. Eve, § 114. Obs. 1.

1. 4. The edition of 1734 adds again after *Jodelet* a stage-direction: 'découvrant sa poitrine' and the edition of 1682 has *Voici un coup*, with omission of *autre*.

1. 5. *l'attaque de Gravelines.* Gravelines is a small sea-town in the département du Nord which the French took from the Spaniards by storm after a siege of two months, 1644. They lost the town again in 1652, but regained it on the 30th of August 1658. To which of the three occasions Jodelet alludes is not clear: perhaps he means the first one, which follows chronologically next after the siege of Arras mentioned p. 32, 9.

1. 7. *Il n'est pas nécessaire.* Cf. note to p. 15, 2.

1. 11. *as-tu là ton carrosse?* See Introduction, p. xxx.

1. 13. *ces dames.* Cf. note to p. 16, 20.

1. 14. *leur donnerions un cadeau.* The modern meaning of *cadeau* is 'present, gift'; in the seventeenth century it often occurs also with the meaning 'repas ('treat') qu'on donne hors de chez soi...', particulièrement à la campagne' (Furetière). In this sense it became however obsolete even in Furetière's time (he died 1688). Music and dancing were not excluded from it, as a passage from *Les Amants magnifiques* (I. 1) shows: 'elles y ont reçu des cadeaux merveilleux de musique et de danse'.

PAGE 34.

1. 1. *c'est bien avisé* 'that is a happy thought'. Cf. note to p. 7, 2.

1. 2. *il faut...compagnie.* Cf. p. 30, 18 and Appendix, p. 94.

11. 4—8. *Holà! Champagne...toujours seul.* The whole passage is apparently an imitation of the beginning of Act I. Scene 5 of Tristan L'Hermite's (1601—1655) comedy *Le Parasite* (1654), where 'Le Capitan' calls 'Holà, ho, Bourguignon, Champagne, Le Picard, Le Basque, Cascaret!...Las d'aller (name of a valet 'lazy runner'), Triboulet! Où sont tous mes valets?...Je ne suis point servi: toute cette canaille Se cache au cabaret, ainsi que rats en paille. Holà! qu'on vienne à moi'.

1. 6. *qu'il y ait gentilhomme.* Cf. note to p. 17, 2.

1. 9. *Monsieur.* Edition of 1682: *Monsieur le Marquis.*

1. 10. *querir.* Most of the grammarians of the seventeenth century who speak about this word recommend the pronunciation 'crir' or 'cri' which is at present considered vulgar. The good pronunciation of the present day is best represented by the spelling 'querir', but the old spelling without accent continues.

1. 11. *peupler la solitude de notre bal.* See Appendix, p. 95.

1. 13. *toi-même, Marquis, que t'en semble?* The disjunctive form of a personal pronoun may be put at the beginning of a sentence without entering into its construction. Its real relation to the sentence is shown by another pronoun later on. For instance, A. Chénier says '*Moi, l'espérance amie est bien loin de mon cœur*', and V. Hugo in his *Hernani*, III. 4 '*Moi sais-tu ce que peut cette main généreuse T'offrir de magnifiques*'; similarly here. Also a noun sometimes occurs in the same absolute position at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. *Le Tartuffe*, I. 2 '*Les bons morceaux de tout, il fait qu'on les lui cède*', and Racine, *Athalie*, II. 7 '*Ce Dieu, depuis longtemps votre unique refuge, Que deviendra l'effet de ses prédictions?*'

que t'en semble. Cf. p. 22, 18 and note.

1. 14. *nos libertés.* Cf. note to p. 17, 6.

1. 15. *les braies nettes*, called already by Oudin (1656) a vulgar expression (meaning 'sans dommage') and so it is still. It has a very comic effect here by its contrast with the poetical *nos libertés*. On *braies* cf. note to p. 10, 12.

1. 16. *ne tient plus qu'à un filet.* Edition of 1682 leaves out *plus*.

1. 17. *naturel.* Cf. Introduction, p. xxvi.

1. 21. After *là-dessus* the edition of 1682 adds the stage-direction 'Il médite'.

PAGE 35.

1. 2. *que nous ayons*. Edition of 1682: *que nous oyions* ('let us hear').

quelque chose qu'on ait fait. The subjunctive is used here in the relative sentence according to Eve, § 253 ('Il cherchait une retraite qui fût tranquille'). The poem (*quelque chose*) of which Cathos speaks has not yet been written, but only forms the object of her desire.

1. 4. *je me treuve*. Cf. note to p. 11, 13.

1. 5. *la quantité des*. Edition of 1682: *la quantité de*.

1. 6. *que j'y ai faites*, namely 'à la veine poétique'. Edition of 1682: *que j'y ai fait faire*.

1. 7. *est cela?* Edition of 1682: *est-ce là?*

11. 7—9. *Je fais toujours...un impromptu à loisir*. The jokes of the first verse to which one cannot find the second and of the *impromptu à loisir* have been often repeated since Molière; the latter was possibly suggested by an anecdote told of Ysarn, one of the frequenters of Mlle de Scudéry's Saturdays. On the famous *journée des madrigaux* (1653) he, like the other guests, had to make an extempore madrigal, and produced the following four lines:

'Je pourrais bien faire sans peine
Quelque fort méchant madrigal;
Mais pour ne le faire point mal,
Je demande un délai de quinzaine',

but afterwards 'protesta hautement qu'on ne le surprendrait plus, et qu'il ne lui arriverait point de marcher sans des impromptus de poche'.

1. 17. *m'a voulu mener*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 18. *courir un cerf* 'to hunt a stag'. On *courir* used in a transitive sense cf. Eve, § 112.

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SCÈNE XII.

1. 2. The edition of 1682 gives here and at the head of the following scenes fuller lists of the 'dramatis personæ'.

1. 5. *ont eu fantaisie*. Cf. note to p. 10, 3.

les âmes des pieds. See Appendix, p. 96.

1. 6. *remplir les vuides de notre assemblée.* See Appendix, p. 95. As to the pronunciation and spelling of *vuides* it is interesting to compare the statements of the first four editions of the dictionary of the Academy. 1694 it has '*vuide*: on prononce peu le second *u*', 1718 '*vuide*: on ne prononce point le second *u*', 1740 '*vuide*: on ne prononce pas le second *u* et quelques uns ne l'écrivent plus', and the edition of 1762 has *vide*, which is the present spelling.

1. 10. *dans les formes.* Cf. note to p. 8, 22.

1. 15. *Il a tout à fait la taille élégante.* The edition of 1682 puts more naturally *tout à fait* before *élégante*.

1. 16. *danser proprement.* See Appendix, p. 94.

1. 17. *Ma franchise va danser la courante.* *Franchise* has here the same meaning as p. 17, 5. The *courante* was a grave dance in 3/2 time consisting of two parts, each of which was repeated. Its name reminds us of the running figures predominating in the music. It was danced (originally jumped) by two persons. (Mascarille dances it with Madelon, and afterwards Jodelet with Cathos.) Furetière calls it the most popular dance in France and describes it as follows: '*elle se fait d'un temps* (performed by bending in the middle of a *pas* and finishing it while rising again), *d'un pas, d'un balancement et d'un coupé* (consisting in a light jump and bending of the left foot, while the right foot passes over it)'. The words *ma franchise va danser la courante* might be rendered 'the liberty of my heart will dance a courante'. Mascarille means to say that the liberty of his heart will be lost.

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1. 3. *je ne fais que sortir de maladie.* Cf. note to p. 31, 2. There *maladie* was used with an article, because a relative sentence followed; here it is quite general.

SCÈNE XIII

1. 7. *La Grange.* The edition of 1682 adds the stage-direction '*un bâton à la main*'.

1. 9. *que les coups en seraient aussi* 'that there would be blows in the bargain' (literally 'that blows would also be part of it'). As to the use of *en* cf. '*il était de ceux qui se multiplient*', Eve, § 126.

1. 12. *C'est bien à vous...à vouloir faire* 'it becomes you indeed... to set up for'. The modern distinction between '*c'est à moi de faire qlqch.*' ('it becomes me to do something') and '*c'est à moi à faire qlqch.*' ('it is my turn to do something') is not observed in the seventeenth century. Thus we find in Molière's *L'Étourdi*, IV. 2 '*C'est à vous de rêver et de faire des songes*' ('it becomes you'), and in his *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, V. 5 '*je vous dois entière obéissance, et c'est à vous à disposer de moi selon vos volontés*' ('it becomes you').

infâme que vous êtes. Cf. note to p. 1, 29.

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SCÈNE XIV.

1. 3. *je n'ai pas voulu faire semblant de rien* 'I would not seem to take any notice of it'. *Rien* and some other indefinite pronouns require at present the negative *ne* in order to get a negative sense; in the seventeenth century they are often used with *ne-pas* in the same sense, thus *George Dandin*, II. 8 '*Ne faites pas semblant de rien*'. It is true that the two *femmes savantes* Philaminte and Bélise find the use of *pas* in such cases detestable; Martine (the servant): '*Et tous vos biaux dictons ('sayings') ne servent pas de rien...Bélise:...De pas mis avec rien tu fais la récidive ('your old mistake'), Et c'est, comme on t'a dit, trop d'une négative*', *Les Femmes savantes*, II. 6.

1. 6. *ne laissons pas d'achever.* Cf. note to p. 1, 28.

SCÈNE XV.

1. 13. *vous autres.* The edition of 1682 adds the stage-direction: '*Trois ou quatre spadassins ('bravoes') entrent*'.

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1. 6. *vous donner dans la vue* 'to dazzle your eyes'. Cf. note to p. 9, 27.

si vous les voulez aimer. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 9. *Adieu notre braverie* is a grammatically incomplete sentence, in which *notre braverie* should not be taken in the sense of a vocative, but of a nominative, and *adieu* be understood as 'gone'. Similar examples are not rare, for instance La Fontaine '*L'âge la fit déchoir: adieu tous les amants*'. *Braverie* ('finery') is now obsolete.

1. 11. *d'aller sur nos brisées* 'to tread on our ground, to compete with us'. *Brisées* is a sporting term meaning 'boughs rent by hunters from trees in order to mark the way taken by deer'.

1. 18. *dépêchez* 'make haste'. 'To make haste' is in French *se dépêcher*; instead of the imperative of this reflexive verb however forms of the absolute verb *dépêcher* are often used (*dépêche, dépêchons, dépêchez*). The same may be said about *s'arrêter*.

PAGE 40.

1. 2. *laissons*. Edition of 1682: *laisserons*.

1. 3. *nous n'en serons*. Edition of 1682: *nous ne serons*.

1. 4. *jalous*. The edition of 1682 adds the stage-direction: 'Lucile et Célimène (who entered in Scene XII.) sortent'.

SCÈNE XVI.

1. 14. *coquines que vous êtes*. Cf. note to p. 1, 29.

vous nous mettez dans de beaux draps blancs (literally 'you put us in fine white sheets, in a fine bed') is a familiar way of saying 'you expose us'. Translate 'thanks to you, we are in a pretty pair of shoes'.

1. 16. *de ces messieurs*. The edition of 1682 adds 'et de ces dames'.

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1. 1. *une pièce sanglante*. Cf. note to p. 5, 12. *Sanglant* is used here metaphorically in the sense of 'cruel' as in 'un sanglant affront, outrage', 'une injure, raillerie sanglante'.

1. 6. *en* with the feminine of the definite article often occurs in the seventeenth century, now only in the expressions '*en l'absence*', '*en la présence*'. Molière seems to offer no other instance, but in Racine we find 'constance *en la* perte des siens', 'cantiques composés *en la* louange de Dieu', '*en la* personne de Néron'. Cf. Eve, § 159.

1. 8. *Voilà ce que c'est que du monde* 'so the world goes'. Instead of *que du monde*, *que le monde* might be used, on which cf. note to p. 1, 29. Similarly, if we had instead of the substantive an infinitive, both *que de* and *que* would be possible: 'c'est mériter la mort *que (de)* l'attendre d'autrui'. Cf. Eve, § 68.

SCÈNE XVII.

1. 18. *à leur défaut* 'as they failed to do so'.

1. 20. *je vous veux payer*. Cf. note to p. 2, 33.

1. 21. *qui me tient* 'what hinders me'. In modern French *qui* is not used as the neuter of the interrogative pronoun in indirect questions except after *voici, voilà* (cf. Eve, § 100; in direct questions it is occasionally still used so, e.g. '*Qui est vieilli en lui? C'est sa force vitale*'); in the seventeenth century as in older French it is sometimes found in indirect questions. Thus *Le Dépit amoureux*, III. 4 'Polydore: Je vois...Que vous savez déjà *qui* m'amène en ces lieux. Albert: Hélas! oui. Polydore: La nouvelle a droit de vous surprendre'. But also as now *Les Femmes savantes*, II. 2 'Savez vous *ce qui* m'amène ici?'

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1. 3. *qui êtes cause*. We expect to find *la cause*; *être cause de qlqch.* and *être la cause de qlqch.* are however both in use. The former may be compared with *chercher fortune* and similar expressions (cf. note to p. 10, 3).

1. 5. *sonnets et sonnettes*. The pun on the two words *sonnets* ('sonnets') and *sonnettes* ('little bells'; Gorgibus probably thinks of fool's-bells) may have been suggested to Molière by an anecdote told of Malherbe by his disciple Racan: Malherbe had for a time a fancy for making sonnets with different rhymes in the two quatrains (cf. note to p. 20, 9). Racan remarked to him 'que ce n'était pas un sonnet si l'on n'observait les règles ordinaires de rimer les deux premiers quatrains', whereupon Malherbe replied 'Eh bien, Monsieur, si ce n'est un *sonnet*, c'est une *sonnette*'.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTED FROM SOMAIZE'S *GRAND DICTIONNAIRE
DES PRÉCIEUSES.*

Aimer.—J'aime beaucoup les gens d'esprit : *J'ai un furieux tendre pour les gens d'esprit.*

Ajuster.—Je n'ai jamais vu personne qui s'ajusta mieux que vous : *Je n'ai jamais vu personne qui porta plus loin que vous l'élégance de l'ajustement.*

Âme.—Vous avez l'âme matérielle : *Vous avez la forme enfoncée dans la matière.*

Asseoir (S').—Soyez-vous, s'il vous plaît : *Contentez, s'il vous plaît, l'envie que ce siège a de vous embrasser.*

Bonne.—Cette odeur est tout à fait bonne : *Cette odeur est tout à fait de qualité.*

Canons.—N'avoir point de canons : *Avoir la jambe toute unie.*

Cerveau.—Le cerveau : *Le sublime.*

Chaise.—La chaise empêche que l'on ne se crotte : *La chaise est un admirable retranchement contre les insultes de la boue et du mauvais temps.*

Choses.—Ces gens-là ne font pas les choses comme il faut : *Ces gens-là ont un procédé tout à fait irrégulier.*

— Les choses que vous dites sont fort communes : *Les choses que vous dites sont du dernier bourgeois.*

— Il faut avouer que vous dites les choses comme il faut : *Il faut avouer que vous donnez dans le vrai de la chose.*

Compliment.—Nous ne saurions répondre à la douceur de votre compliment : *Nous ne saurions donner de notre sérieux dans le doux de votre flatterie.*

Concevoir.—Concevoir mal les choses : *Avoir l'intelligence épaisse.*

Conversation.—Ils n'ont point de conversation : *Ils sont secs de conversation.*

Crotter.—Crotter ses souliers : *Imprimer ses souliers en boue.*

Danser.—Il danse bien : *Il danse proprement.*

Dire.—Vous dites de belles choses : *Vous faites dépense en beaux discours.*

Divertir.—Je ne me suis point divertie jusques ici : *J'ai été jusques ici dans un jeûne effroyable de divertissement.*

Encore.—Il faut encore un fauteuil : *Il faut le surcroît d'un fauteuil.*

Enjoué.—Être enjoué : *Être un Amilcar.* Ceux qui ont lu la Clélie savent pour quelle raison l'on appelle un homme enjoué un Amilcar¹.

Fille.—Une vieille fille, et qui a de l'esprit : *Une précieuse véritable.*

— Une fille coquette et qui veut passer pour un bel esprit : *Une précieuse ridicule.*

Fleurettes.—Conter fleurettes : *Pousser le dernier doux.*

Friser.—Ces personnes-là ne sont point frisées : *Ces personnes-là ont la tête irrégulière en cheveux.*

Galant.—Vous allez surpasser tout ce qu'il y a de plus galant dans Paris : *Vous allez faire pic, repic et capot tout ce qu'il y a de plus galant dans Paris.*

Galanterie.—Ils ne savent pas du tout la galanterie : *Ils sont tout à fait incongrus en galanterie.*

Garniture.—Ma garniture vient-elle bien à mon habit ? *Ma garniture est-elle congruante à mon habit ?*

Grand.—Je vous ai une grande obligation : *Je vous ai la dernière obligation.*

Il faut prendre garde que dans le langage précieux le mot de *dernière* a plusieurs significations, comme vous allez voir dans les exemples que je vous en vais donner. Il signifie tantôt *grand*, comme l'on voit dans cette phrase : *Je vous ai la dernière obligation* ; tantôt il signifie *tout à fait*, comme l'on peut voir par cet exemple : *Cela est du dernier galant*, pour dire : *Cela est tout à fait galant* ; et enfin il signifie *première*. C'est pourquoi les Précieuses

¹ Amilcar, the portrait of the poet Sarrasin (1605—1654), is the type of a sprightly and pleasant lover in Mlle de Scudéry's novel *Clélie*.

disent la dernière beauté pour signifier la première. J'ai cru que cet avis était nécessaire, puisque ce mot a jusques ici embarrassé plusieurs personnes. Quelques-uns tiennent que c'est un des plus anciens mots de la langue précieuse, quoiqu'il y en ait beaucoup d'autres qui lui disputent.

Idée.—Les choses que vous m'avez dites me donnent une idée ridicule :
Les choses que vous m'avez dites me font une vision ridicule.

Un laquais : *Un nécessaire, ou un fidèle.*

Louer.—Votre complaisance fait que vous nous louez de la sorte : *Votre complaisance vous fait pousser ainsi la libéralité de vos louanges.*

Manière.—Il ne sait pas du tout la manière de faire les choses : *Il ne sait pas du tout le bel air des choses.*

Meilleur.—Je n'ai jamais senti une meilleure odeur : *Je n'ai jamais respiré d'odeur mieux conditionnée.*

Miroir : *Le conseiller des grâces, ou le peintre de la dernière fidélité, le singe de la nature, le caméléon¹.*

Paris.—Il faudrait n'avoir point de raison pour ne pas confesser que toutes les bonnes choses abondent dans Paris : *Il faudrait être l'antipode de la raison pour ne pas confesser que Paris est le grand bureau des merveilles et le centre du bon goût.*

Paris : *Le centre de la belle galanterie.*

Peupler.—Peupler un bal : *Remplir la solitude d'un bal, ou remplir ses vuides.*

Plaire.—Ces personnes-là n'ont point cet air qui plaît : *Ces personnes-là n'ont point cet air qui donne bonne opinion des gens.*

Plumes.—N'avoir point de plumes à son chapeau : *Avoir son chapeau désarmé de plumes.*

Rubans.—Leurs habits n'ont pas assez de rubans : *Leurs habits souffrent indigence de rubans.*

¹ In 1641 M. de Grenaille had observed in his *Les Plaisirs des Dames* 'l'excellence du miroir paraît encore en ce qu'il est le fidèle conseiller de la beauté, ainsi que le poète l'appelle'. The poet referred to is evidently Martial, who, in one of his epigrams (ix. 16), speaking of Domitianus' cup-bearer who dedicated his locks and a mirror to Aesculapius at Pergamus, says :

Consilium formae, speculum, dulcesque capillos
Pergameo posuit dona sacrata deo
Ille puer tota domino gratissimus aula.

Rudes.—Ces mots-là sont tout à fait rudes à l'oreille : *Une oreille un peu délicate pâtit furieusement d'entendre prononcer ces mots-là.*

Sentir.—Sentez un peu ces gants-là : *Attachez un peu la réflexion de votre odorat sur ces gants-là.*

Les sièges : *Les commodités de la conversation.*

Taille.—Il est de belle taille : *Il a la taille tout à fait élégante.*

Tout à fait : *Furieusement.*

Épouvantablement et *terriblement* ont aussi la même signification.

Furieusement, dans la langue précieuse, combat d'antiquité avec le mot de *dernière*, dont nous avons parlé ci-devant; mais, sans examiner les raisons que l'on allègue, je puis dire que *furieusement* se rencontre plus souvent que *dernière*, et qu'il n'est point de Précieuse qui ne le dise plus de cent fois par jour, et que ceux qui affectent le langage des Précieuses l'ont toujours à la bouche.

Les violons : *L'âme des pieds.*

Voir.—Dites-moi, si vous plaît, si l'on peut voir Madame : *Dites-moi, si vous plaît, si Madame est en commodité d'être visible.*

Vulgaire.—Le procédé de ces messieurs est tout à fait vulgaire : *Le procédé de ces messieurs est tout à fait marchand.*

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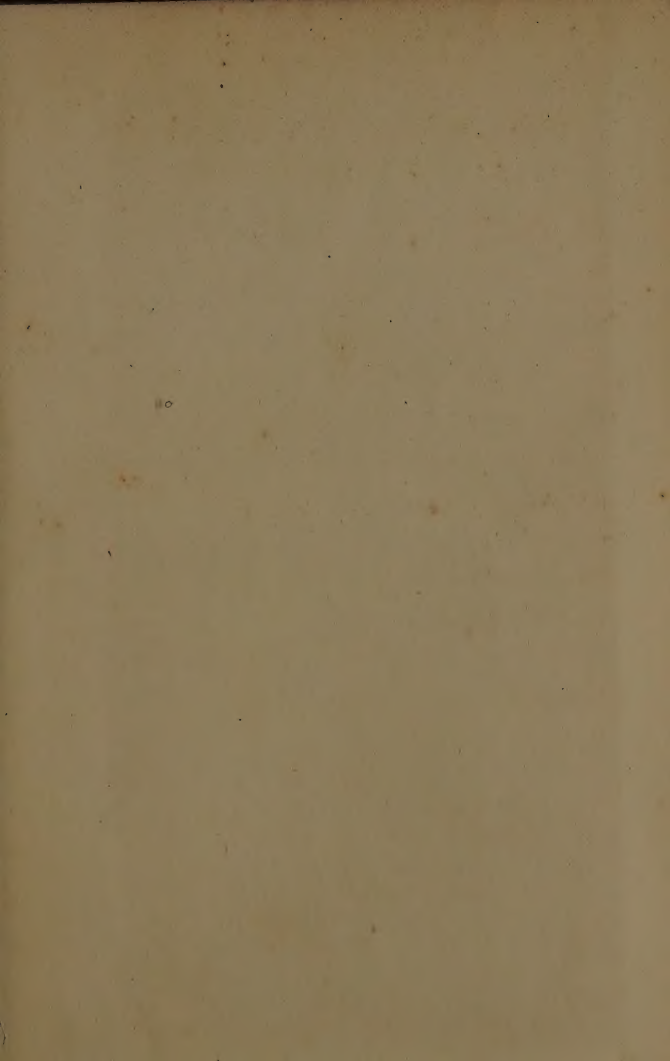
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